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The Daughter *of a* Magnate

BY

FRANK H. SPEARMAN

Illustrated by T. R. Gruger

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THE DAUGHTER OF A MAGNATE

The Daughter of a Magnate

CHAPTER I

A JUNE WATER

THE train, a special, made up of a private car and a diner, was running on a slow order and crawled between the bluffs at a snail's pace.

Ahead, the sun was sinking into the foothills and wherever the eye could reach to the horizon barren wastes lay riotously green under the golden blaze. The river, swollen everywhere out of its banks, spread in a broad and placid flood of yellow over the bottoms, and a hundred shallow lakes studded with willowed islands marked its wandering course to the south and east. The clear, far air of the mountains, the glory of the gold on the June hills and the illimitable stretch of waters below, spellbound the group on the observation platform.

"It's a pity, too," declared Conductor O'Brien, who was acting as mountain Baedeker, "that we're held back this way when we're covering the pret-

tiest stretch on the road for running. It is right along here where you are riding that the speed records of the world have been made. Fourteen and six-tenths miles were done in nine and a half minutes just west of that curve about six months ago—of course it was down hill."

Several of the party were listening. "Do you use speed recorders out here?" asked Allen Harrison.

"How's that?"

"Do you use speed recorders?"

"Only on our slow trains," replied O'Brien. "To put speed recorders on Paddy McGraw or Jimmie the Wind would be like timing a teal duck with an eight-day clock. Sir?" he asked, turning to another questioner while the laugh lingered on his side. "No; those are not really mountains at all. Those are the foothills of the Sleepy Cat range—west of the Spider Water. We get into that range about two hundred miles from here—well, I say they are west of the Spider, but for ten days it's been hard to say exactly where the Spider is. The Spider is making us all the trouble with high water just now—and we're coming out into the valley in about a minute," he added as the car gave an embarrassing lurch. "The track is certainly soft, but if you'll stay right where you are, on this side, ladies, you'll get the view of your

lives when we leave the bluffs. The valley is about nine miles broad and it's pretty much all under water."

Beyond the curve they were taking lay a long tangent stretching like a steel wand across a sea of yellow, and as their engine felt its way very gingerly out upon it there rose from the slow-moving trucks of their car the softened resonance that tells of a sounding-board of waters.

Soon they were drawn among wooded knolls between which hurried little rivers tossed out of the Spider flood into dry waterways and brawling with surprised stones and foaming noisily at stubborn root and impassive culvert. Through the trees the travellers caught passing glimpses of shaded eddies and a wilderness of placid pools. "And this," murmured Gertrude Brock to her sister Marie, "this is the Spider!" O'Brien, talking to the men at her elbow, overheard. "Hardly, Miss Brock; not yet. You haven't seen the river yet. This is only the backwater."

They were rising the grade to the bridge approach, and when they emerged a few moments later from the woods the conductor said, "There!"

The panorama of the valley lay before them. High above their level and a mile away, the long thread-like spans of Hailey's great bridge

stretched from pier to pier. To the right of the higher ground a fan of sidetracks spread, with lines of flat cars and gondolas loaded with stone, brush, piling and timbers, and in the foreground two hulking pile-drivers, their leads, like rabbits' ears laid sleekly back, squatted mysteriously. Switch engines puffed impatiently up and down the ladder track shifting stuff to the distant spurs. At the river front an army of men moved like loaded ants over the dikes. Beyond them the eye could mark the boiling yellow of the Spider, its winding channel marked through the waste of waters by whirling driftwood, bobbing wreckage and plunging trees—sweepings of a thousand angry miles. "There's the Spider," repeated the West End conductor, pointing, "out there in the middle where you see things moving right along. That's the Spider, on a twenty-year rampage." The train, moving slowly, stopped. "I guess we've got as close to it as we're going to, for a while. I'll take a look forward."

It was the time of the June water in the mountains. A year earlier the rise had taken the Peace River bridge and with the second heavy year of snow railroad men looked for new trouble. June is not a month for despair, because the mountain men have never yet scheduled despair as a West End liability. But it is a month that puts wrinkles in the

right of way clear across the desert and sows gray hairs in the roadmasters' records from McCloud to Bear Dance. That June the mountain streams roared, the foothills floated, the plains puffed into sponge, and in the thick of it all the Spider Water took a man-slaughtering streak and started over the Bad Lands across lots. The big river forced Bucks' hand once more, and to protect the main line Glover, third of the mountain roadbuilders, was ordered off the high-line construction and back to the hills where Brodie and Hailey slept, to watch the Spider.

The special halted on a tongue of high ground flanking the bridge and extending upstream to where the river was gnawing at the long dike that held it off the approach. The delay was tedious. Doctor Lanning and Allen Harrison went forward to smoke. Gertrude Brock took refuge in a book and Mrs. Whitney, her aunt, annoyed her with stories. Marie Brock and Louise Donner placed their chairs where they could watch the sorting and unloading of never-ending strings of flat cars, the spasmodic activity in the lines of laborers, the hurrying of the foremen and the movement of the rapidly shifting fringe of men on the danger line at the dike.

The clouds which had opened for the dying splendor of the day closed and a shower swept

over the valley; the conductor came back in his raincoat—his party were at dinner. "*Are* we to be detained much longer?" asked Mrs. Whitney.

"For a little while, I'm afraid," replied the trainman diplomatically. "I've been away over there on the dike to see if I could get permission to cross, but I didn't succeed."

"Oh, conductor!" remonstrated Louise Donner.

"And we don't get to Medicine Bend to-night," said Doctor Lanning.

"What we need is a man of influence," suggested Harrison. "We ought never to have let your 'pa' go," he added, turning to Gertrude Brock, beside whom he sat.

"Can't we really get ahead?" Gertrude lifted her brows reproachfully as she addressed the conductor. "It's becoming very tiresome."

O'Brien shook his head.

"Why not see someone in authority?" she persisted.

"I have seen the man in authority, and nearly fell into the river doing it; then he turned me down."

"Did you tell him who we were?" demanded Mrs. Whitney.

"I made all sorts of pleas."

"Does he know that Mr. Bucks *promised* we

should be in Medicine Bend to-night?" asked pretty little Marie Brock.

"He wouldn't in the least mind that."

Mrs. Whitney bridled. "Pray who is he?"

"The construction engineer of the mountain division is the man in charge of the bridge just at present."

"It would be a very simple matter to get orders over his head," suggested Harrison.

"Not very."

"Mr. Bucks?"

"Hardly. No orders would take us over that bridge to-night without Glover's permission."

"What an autocrat!" sighed Mrs. Whitney. "No matter; I don't care to go over it, anyway."

"But I do," protested Gertrude. "I don't feel like staying in this water all night, if you please."

"I'm afraid that's what we'll have to do for a few hours. I told Mr. Glover he would be in trouble if I didn't get my people to Medicine Bend to-night."

"Tell him again," laughed Doctor Lanning.

Conductor O'Brien looked embarrassed. "You'd like to ask particular leave of Mr. Glover for us, I know," suggested Miss Donner.

"Well, hardly—the second time—not of Mr. Glover." A sheet of rain drenched the plate-glass windows. "But I'm going to watch things and

we'll get out just as soon as possible. I know Mr. Glover pretty well. He is all right, but he's been down here now a week without getting out of his clothes and the river rising on him every hour. They've got every grain bag between Salt Lake and Chicago and they're filling them with sand and dumping them in where the river is cutting."

"Any danger of the bridge going?" asked the doctor.

"None in the world, but there's a lot of danger that the river will go. That would leave the bridge hanging over dry land. The fight is to hold the main channel where it belongs. They're getting rock over the bridge from across the river and strengthening the approach for fear the dike should give way. The track is busy every minute, so I couldn't make much impression on Mr. Glover."

There was light talk of a deputation to the dike, followed by the resignation of travellers, cards afterward, and ping-pong. With the deepening of the night the rain fell harder, and the wind rising in gusts drove it against the glass. When the women retired to their compartments the train had been set over above the bridge where the wind, now hard from the southeast, sung steadily around the car.

Gertrude Brock could not sleep. After being

long awake she turned on the light and looked at her watch; it was one o'clock. The wind made her restless and the air in the stateroom had become oppressive. She dressed and opened her door. The lights were very low and the car was silent; all were asleep.

At the rear end she raised a window-shade. The night was lighted by strange waves of lightning, and thunder rumbled in the distance unceasingly. Where she sat she could see the sidings filled with cars, and when a sharper flash lighted the backwater of the lakes, vague outlines of far-off bluffs beetled into the sky.

She drew the shade, for the continuous lightning added to her disquiet. As she did so the rain drove harshly against the car and she retreated to the other side. Feeling presently the coolness of the air she walked to her stateroom for her Newmarket coat, and wrapping it about her, sunk into a chair and closed her eyes. She had hardly fallen asleep when a crash of thunder split the night and woke her. As it rolled angrily away she quickly raised the window-curtain.

The heavens were frenzied. She looked toward the river. Electrical flashes charging from end to end of the angry sky lighted the bridge, reflected the black face of the river and paled flickering lights and flaming torches where, on vanishing

stretches of dike, an army of dim figures, moving unceasingly, lent awe to the spectacle.

She could see smoke from the hurrying switch engines whirled viciously up into the sweeping night and above her head the wind screamed. A gale from the southwest was hurling the Spider against the revetment that held the eastern shore and the day and the night gangs together were reinforcing it. Where the dike gave under the terrific pounding, or where swiftly boiling pools sucked under the heavy piling, Glover's men were sinking fresh relays of mattresses and loading them with stone.

At moments laden flat cars were pushed to the brink of the flood, and men with picks and bars rose spirit-like out of black shadows to scramble up their sides and dump rubble on the sunken brush. Other men toiling in unending procession wheeled and slung sandbags upon the revetment; others stirred crackling watchfires that leaped high into the rain, and over all played the incessant lightning and the angry thunder and the flying night.

She shut from her eyes the strangely moving sight, returned to her compartment, closed her door and lay down. It was quieter within the little room and the fury of the storm was less appalling.

Half dreaming as she lay, mountains shrouded

in a deathly lightning loomed wavering before her, and one, most terrible of all, she strove unwillingly to climb. Up she struggled, clinging and slipping, a cramping fear over all her senses, her ankles clutched in icy fetters, until from above, an apparition, strange and threatening, pushed her, screaming, and she swooned into an awful gulf.

"Gertrude! Gertrude! Wake up!" cried a frightened voice.

The car was rocking in the wind, and as Gertrude opened her door Louise Donner stumbled terrified into her arms. "Did you hear that awful, awful crash? I'm sure the car has been struck."

"No, no, Louise."

"It surely has been. Oh, let us waken the men at once, Gertrude; we shall be killed!"

The two clung to one another. "I'm afraid to stay alone, Gertrude," sobbed her companion.

"Stay with me, Louise. Come." While they spoke the wind died and for a moment the lightning ceased, but the calm, like the storm, was terrifying. As they stood breathless a report like the ripping of a battery burst over their heads, a blast shook the heavy car and howled shrilly away.

Sleep was out of the question. Gertrude looked at her watch. It was four o'clock. The two dressed and sat together till daylight. When morn-

ing broke, dark and gray, the storm had passed and out of the leaden sky a drizzle of rain was falling. Beside the car men were moving. The forward door was open and the conductor in his stormcoat walked in.

"Everything is all right this morning, ladies," he smiled.

"All right? I should think everything all wrong," exclaimed Louise. "We have been frightened to death."

"They've got the cutting stopped," continued O'Brien, smiling. "Mr. Glover has left the dike. He just told me the river had fallen six inches since two o'clock. We'll be out of here now as quick as we can get an engine: they've been switching with ours. There was considerable wind in the night——"

"Considerable *wind!*"

"You didn't notice it, did you? Glover loaded the bridge with freight trains about twelve o'clock and I'm thinking it's lucky, for when the wind went into the northeast about four o'clock I thought it would take my head off. It snapped like dynamite clear across the valley."

"Oh, we heard!"

"When the wind jumped, a crew was dumping stone into the river. The men were ordered off the flat cars but there were so many they didn't

all get the word at once, and while the foreman was chasing them down he was blown clean into the river."

"Drowned?"

"No, he was not. He crawled out away down by the bridge, though a man couldn't have done it once in a thousand times. It was old Bill Dancing—he's got more lives than a cat. Do you remember where we first pulled up the train in the afternoon? A string of ten box cars stood there last night and when the wind shifted it blew the whole bunch off the track."

"Oh, do let us get away from here," urged Gertrude. "I feel as if something worse would happen if we stayed. I'm sorry we ever left McCloud yesterday."

The men came from their compartments and there was more talk of the storm. Clem and his helpers were starting breakfast in the dining-car and the doctor and Harrison wanted to walk down to see where the river had cut into the dike. Mrs. Whitney had not appeared and they asked the young ladies to go with them. Gertrude objected. A foggy haze hung over the valley.

"Come along," urged Harrison; "the air will give you an appetite."

After some remonstrating she put on her heavy coat, and carrying umbrellas the four started

under the conductor's guidance across to the dike. They picked their steps along curving tracks, between material piles and through the débris of the night. On the dike they spent some time looking at the gaps and listening to explanations of how the river worked to undermine and how it had been checked. Watchers hooded in yellow slickers patrolled the narrow jetties or, motionless, studied the eddies boiling at their feet.

Returning, the party walked around the edge of the camp where cooks were busy about steaming kettles. Under long, open tents wearied men lying on scattered hay slept after the hardship of the night. In the drizzling haze half a dozen men, assistants to the engineer—rough looking but strong-featured and quick-eyed—sat with buckets of steaming coffee about a huge campfire. Four men bearing a litter came down the path. Doctor Lanning halted them. A laborer had been pinched during the night between loads of piling projecting over the ends of flat cars and they told the doctor his chest was hurt. A soiled neckcloth covered his face but his stertorous breathing could be heard, and Gertrude Brock begged the doctor to go to the camp with the injured man and see whether something could not be done to relieve him until the company surgeon arrived. The doctor, with O'Brien, turned back. Gertrude, depressed by the

incident, followed Louise and Allen Harrison along the path which wound round a clump of willows flanking the campfire.

On the sloping bank below the trees and a little out of the wind a man on a mattress of willows lay stretched asleep. He was clad in leather, mud-stained and wrinkled, and the big brown boots that cased his feet were strapped tightly above his knees. An arm, outstretched, supported his head, hidden under a soft gray hat. Like the thick gloves that covered his clasped hands, his hat and the handkerchief knotted about his neck were soaked by the rain, falling quietly and trickling down the furrows of his leather coat. But his attitude was one of exhaustion, and trifles of discomfort were lost in his deep respiration.

"Oh!" exclaimed Gertrude Brock under her breath, "look at that poor fellow asleep in the rain. Allen?"

Allen Harrison, ahead, was struggling to hold his umbrella upright while he rolled a cigarette. He turned as he passed the paper across his lips. "Throw your coat over him, Allen."

Harrison pasted the paper roll, and putting it to his mouth felt for his matchcase. "Throw *my* coat over him!"

"Yes."

Allen took out a match. "Well, I like that.

That's like you, Gertrude. Suppose you throw your coat over him."

Gertrude looked silently at her companion. There is a moment when women should be humored; not all men are fortunate enough to recognize it. Louise, still walking ahead, called, "Come on," but Gertrude did not move.

"Allen, throw your coat over the poor fellow," she urged. "You wouldn't let your dog lie like that in the rain."

"But, Gertrude—do me the kindness"—he passed his umbrella to her that he might better manage the lighting—"he's not my dog."

If she made answer it was only in the expression of her eyes. She handed the umbrella back, flung open her long coat and slipped it from her shoulders. With the heavy garment in her hands she stepped from her path toward the sleeper and noticed for the first time an utterly disreputable-looking dog lying beside him in the weeds. The dog's long hair was bedraggled to the color of the mud he curled in, and as he opened his eyes without raising his head, Gertrude hesitated; but his tail spoke a kindly greeting. He knew no harm was meant and he watched unconcernedly while, determined not to recede from her impulse, Gertrude stepped hastily to the sleeper's side and dropped her coat over his shoulders.

Louise was too far ahead to notice the incident. After breakfast she asked Gertrude what the matter was.

"Nothing. Allen and I had our first quarrel this morning."

As she spoke, the train, high in the air, was creeping over the Spider bridge.

CHAPTER II

AN ERROR AT HEADQUARTERS

WHEN the Brock-Harrison party, familiarly known—among those with whom they were by no means familiar—as the Steel Crowd, bought the transcontinental lines that J. S. Bucks, the second vice-president and general manager, had built up into a system, their first visit to the West End was awaited with some uneasiness. An impression prevailed that the new owners might take decided liberties with what Conductor O'Brien termed the "personal" of the operating department.

But week after week followed the widely heralded announcement of the purchase without the looked-for visit from the new owners. During the interval West End men from the general superintendent down were admittedly on edge—with the exception of Conductor O'Brien. "If I go, I go," was all he said, and in making the statement in his even, significant way it was generally understood that the trainman that ran the pay-cars and the swell mountain specials had in view

a superintendency on the New York Central. On what he rested his confidence in the opening no one certainly knew, though Pat Francis claimed it was based wholly on a cigar in a glass case once given to the genial conductor by Chauncey M. Depew when travelling special to the coast under his charge.

Be that as it may, when the West End was at last electrified by the announcement that the Brock-Harrison syndicate train had already crossed the Missouri and might be expected any day, O'Brien with his usual luck was detailed as one of the conductors to take charge of the visitors.

The pang in the operating department was that the long-delayed inspection tour should have come just at a time when the water had softened things until every train on the mountain division was run under slow-orders.

At McCloud Vice-president Bucks, a very old campaigner, had held the party for two days to avoid the adverse conditions in the west and turned the financiers of the party south to inspect branches while the road was drying in the hills. But the party of visitors contained two distinct elements, the money-makers and the money-spenders—the generation that made the investment and the generation that distributed the dividends. The young people rebelled at branch line

trips and insisted on heading for sightseeing and hunting straight into the mountains. Accordingly, at McCloud the party split, and while Henry S. Brock and his business associates looked over the branches, his private cars containing his family and certain of their friends were headed for the headquarters of the mountain division, Medicine Bend.

Medicine Bend is not quite the same town it used to be, and disappointment must necessarily attend efforts to identify the once familiar landmarks of the mountain division. Improvement, implacable priestess of American industry, has well-nigh obliterated the picturesque features of pioneer days. The very right of way of the earliest overland line, abandoned for miles and miles, is seen now from the car windows bleaching on the desert. So once its own rails, vigorous and aggressive, skirted grinning heaps of buffalo bones, and its own tangents were spiked across the grave of pony rider and Indian brave—the king was: the king is.

But the Sweetgrass winds are the same. The same snows whiten the peaks, the same sun dies in western glory, and the mountains still see nestling among the tracks at the bend of the Medicine River the first headquarters building of the mountain division, nicknamed The Wickiup. What, in

the face of continual and unrelenting changes, could have saved the Wickiup? Not the fact that the crazy old gables can boast the storm and stress of the mad railroad life of another day than this —for every deserted curve and hill of the line can do as much. The Wickiup has a better claim to immortality, for once its cracked and smoky walls, raised solely to house the problems and perplexities of the operating department, sheltered a pair of lovers, so strenuous in their perplexities that even yet in the gleam of the long night-fires of the West End their story is told.

In that day the construction department of the mountain division was cooped up at one end of the hall on the second floor of the building. Bucks at that time thought twice before he indorsed one of Glover's twenty-thousand-dollar specifications. Now, with the department occupying the entire third floor and pushing out of the dormer windows, a million-dollar estimate goes through like a requisition for postage stamps.

But in spite of his hole-in-the-wall office, Glover, the construction engineer of that day, was a man to be reckoned with in estimates of West End men. They knew him for a captain long before he left his mark on the Spider the time he held the river for a straight week at twenty-eight feet, bitted and gagged between Hailey's piers, and forced

the yellow tramp to understand that if it had killed Hailey there were equally bad men left on the mountain pay-roll. Glover, it may be said, took his final degrees in engineering in the Grand Cañon; he was a member of the Bush party, and of the four that got back alive to Medicine one was Ab Glover.

Glover rebuilt the whole system of snowsheds on the West End, practically everything from the Peace to the Sierras. Every section foreman in the railroad Bad Lands knew Glover. Just how he happened to lose his position as chief engineer of the system—for he was a big man on the East End when he first came with the road—no one certainly knew. Some said he spoke his mind too freely—a bad trait in a railroad man; others said he could not hold down the job. All they knew in the mountains was that as a snow fighter he could wear out all the plows on the division, and that if a branch line were needed in haste Glover would have the rails down before an ordinary man could get his bids in.

Ordinarily these things are expected from a mountain constructionist and elicit no comment from headquarters, but the matter at the Spider was one that could hardly pass unnoticed. For a year Glover had been begging for a stenographer. Writing, to him, was as distasteful as soda-water,

and one morning soon after his return from the valley flood a letter came with the news that a competent stenographer had been assigned to him and would report at once for duty at Medicine Bend.

Glover emerged from his hall-office in great spirits and showed the letter to Callahan, the general superintendent, for congratulations. "That is right," commented Callahan cynically. "You saved them a hundred thousand dollars last month—they are going to blow ten a week on you. By the way, your stenographer is here."

"He is?"

"She is. Your stenographer, a very dignified young lady, came in on Number One. You had better go and get shaved. She has been in to inquire for you and has gone to look up a boarding-place. Get her started as soon as you can—I want to see your figures on the Rat Cañon work."

A helper now would be a boon from heaven. "But she won't stay long after she sees this office," Glover reflected ruefully as he returned to it. He knew from experience that stenographers were hard to hold at Medicine Bend. They usually came out for their health and left at the slightest symptoms of improvement. He worried as to whether he might possibly have been unlucky enough to draw another invalid. And at the very

moment he had determined he would not lose his new assistant if good treatment would keep her he saw a trainman far down the gloomy hall pointing a finger in his direction—saw a young lady coming toward him and realized he ought to have taken time that morning to get shaved.

There was nothing to do but make the best of it; dismissing his embarrassment he rose to greet the newcomer. His first reflection was that he had not drawn an invalid, for he had never seen a fresher face in his life, and her bearing had the confidence of health itself.

"I heard you had been here," he said reassuringly as the young lady hesitated at his door.

"Pardon me?"

"I heard you had been here," he repeated with deference.

"I wish to send a despatch," she replied with an odd intonation. Her reply seemed so at variance with his greeting that a chill tempered his enthusiasm. Could they possibly have sent him a deaf stenographer?—one worn in the exacting service at headquarters? There was always a fly somewhere in his ointment, and so capable and engaging a young lady seemed really too good to be true. He saw the message blank in her hand. "Let me take it," he suggested, and added, raising his voice, "It shall go at once." The young lady

gave him the message and sitting down at his desk he pressed an electric call. Whatever her misfortunes she enlisted his sympathy instantly, and as no one had ever accused him of having a weak voice he determined he would make the best of the situation. "Be seated, please," he said. She looked at him curiously. "Pray, be seated," he repeated more firmly.

"I desire only to pay for my telegram."

"Not at all. It isn't necessary. Just be seated!"

In some bewilderment she sat down on the edge of the chair beside which she stood.

"We are cramped for room at present in the construction department," he went on, affixing his frank to the telegram. "Here, Gloomy, rush this, my boy," said he to the messenger, who came through a door connecting with the operator's room. "But we have the promise of more space soon," he resumed, addressing the young lady hopefully. "I have had your desk placed there to give you the benefit of the south light."

The stenographer studied the superintendent of construction with some surprise. His determination to provide for her comfort was most apparent and his apologies for his crowded quarters were so sincere that they could not but appeal to a stranger. Her expression changed. Glover felt

that he ought to ask her to take off her hat, but could not for his life. The frankness of her eyes was rather too confusing to support very much of at once, and he busied himself at sorting the blueprints on his table, guiltily aware that she was alive to his unshaven condition. He endeavored to lead the conversation. "We have excellent prospects of a new headquarters building." As he spoke he looked up. Her eyes were certainly extraordinary. Could she be laughing at him? The prospect of a new building had been, it was true, a joke for many years and evidently she put no more confidence in the statement than he did himself. "Of course, you are aware," he continued to bolster his assertion, "that the road has been bought by an immensely rich lot of Pittsburg duffers——"

The stenographer half rose in her chair. "Will it not be possible for me to pay for my message at once?" she asked somewhat peremptorily.

"I have already franked it."

"But I did not——"

"Don't mention it. All I will ask in return is that you will help me get some letters out of the way to-day," returned Glover, laying a pencil and note-book on the desk before her. "The other work may go till to-morrow. By the way, have you found a boarding-place?"

"A boarding-place?"

"I understand you were looking for one."

"I have one."

"The first letter is to Mr. Bucks—I fancy you know *his* address—" She did not begin with alacrity. Their eyes met, and in hers there was a queerish expression.

"I'm not at all sure I ought to undertake this," she said rapidly and with a touch of disdainful mischief.

"Give yourself no uneasiness—" he began.

"It is you I fear who are giving yourself uneasiness," she interrupted.

"No, I dictate very slowly. Let's make a trial anyway." To avoid embarrassment he looked the other way when he saw she had taken up the pencil.

"My Dear Bucks," he began. "Your letter with programme for the Pittsburg party is received. Why am I to be nailed to the cross with part of the entertaining? There's no hunting now. The hair is falling off grizzlies and Goff wouldn't take his dogs out at this season for the President of the United States. What would you think of detailing Paddy McGraw to give the young men a fast ride—they have heard of him. I talked yesterday with one of them. He wanted to see a train robber and I introduced him to Conductor

O'Brien, but he never saw the joke, and you know how depressing explanations are. Don't, my dear Bucks, put me on a private car with these people for four weeks—my brother died of paresis——"

"Oh!" He turned. The stenographer's cheeks were burning; she was astonishingly pretty. "I'm going too fast, I'm afraid," said Glover.

"I do not think I had better attempt to continue," she answered, rising. Her eyes fairly burned the brown mountain engineer.

"As you like," he replied, rising too. "It was hardly fair to ask you to work to-day. By the way, Mr. Bucks forgot to give me your name."

"Is it necessary that you should have my name?"

"Not in the least," returned Glover with insistent consideration, "any name at all will do, so I shall know what to call you."

For an instant she seemed unable to catch her breath, and he was about to explain that the rarefied air often affected newcomers in that way when she answered with some intensity, "I am Miss Brock. I never have occasion to use any other name."

Whatever result she looked for from her spirited words, his manner lost none of its urbanity. "Indeed? That's the name of our Pittsburg magnate. You ought to be sure of a position under

him—you might turn out to be a relation," he laughed, softly.

"Quite possibly."

"Do not return this afternoon," he continued as she backed away from him. "This mountain air is exhausting at first——"

"Your letters?" she queried with an expression that approached pleasant irony.

"They may wait."

She courtesied quaintly. He had never seen such a woman in his life, and as his eyes fixed on her down the dim hall he was overpowered by the grace of her vanishing figure.

Sitting at his table he was still thinking of her when Solomon, the messenger, came in with a telegram. The boy sat down opposite the engineer, while the latter read the message.

"That Miss Brock is fine, isn't she?"

Glover scowled. "I took a despatch over to the car yesterday and she gave me a dollar," continued Solomon.

"What car?"

"Her car. She's in that Pittsburg party."

"The young lady that sat here a moment ago?"

"Sure; didn't you know? There she goes now to the car again." Glover stepped to the east window. A young lady was gathering up her gown to mount the car-step and a porter was as-

sisting her. The daintiness of her manner was a nightmare of conviction. Glover turned from the window and began tearing up papers on his table. He tore up all the worthless papers in sight and for months afterward missed valuable ones. When he had filled the waste-basket he rammed blue-prints down into it with his foot until he succeeded in smashing it. Then he sat down and held his head between his hands.

She was entitled to an apology, or an attempt at one at least, and though he would rather have faced a Sweetgrass blizzard than an interview he set his lips and with bitterness in his heart made his preparations. The incident only renewed his confidence in his incredible stupidity, but what he felt was that a girl with such eyes as hers could never be brought to believe it genuine.

An hour afterward he knocked at the door of the long olive car that stood east of the station. The hand-rails were very bright and the large plate windows shone spotless, but the brown shades inside were drawn. Glover touched the call-button and to the uniformed colored man who answered he gave his card asking for Miss Brock.

An instant during which he had once waited for a dynamite blast when unable to get safely away, came back to him. Standing on the handsome platform he remembered wondering at that time

whether he should land in one place or in several places. Now, he wished himself away from that door even if he had to crouch again on the ledge which he had found in a deadly moment he could not escape from. On the previous occasion the fuse had mercifully failed to burn. This time when he collected his thoughts the colored man was smilingly telling him for the second time that Miss Brock was not in.

CHAPTER III

INTO THE MOUNTAINS

"YOU put me in an awkward position," muttered Bucks, looking out of the window.

"But it is grace itself compared with the position I should be in now among the Pittsburgers," objected Glover, shifting his legs again.

"If you won't go, I must, that's all," continued the general manager. "I can't send Tom, Dick, or Harry with these people, Ab. Gentlemen must be entertained as such. On the hunting do the best you can; they want chiefly to see the country and I can't have them put through it on a tourist basis. I want them to see things globe-trotters don't see and can't see without someone like you You ought to do that much for our President—Henry S. Brock is not only a national man, and a big one in the new railroad game, but besides being the owner of this whole system he is my best friend. We sat at telegraph keys together a long time before he was rated at sixty million dollars. I care nothing for the party except that it includes

his own family and is made up of his friends and associates and he looks to me here as I should look to him in the East were circumstances reversed."

Bucks paused. Glover stared a moment. "If you put it in that way let us drop it," said he at last. "I will go."

"The blunder was not a life and death matter. In the mountains where we don't see one woman a year it might happen that any man expecting one young lady should mistake another for her. Miss Brock is full of mischief, and the temptation to her to let you deceive yourself was too great, that's all. If I could go without sacrificing the interests of all of us in the reorganization I shouldn't ask you to go."

"Let it pass."

The day had been planned for the little reception to the visitors. The arrival of two more private cars had added the directors, the hunting party and more women to the company. The women were to drive during the day, and the men had arranged to inspect the roundhouse, the shops, and the division terminals and to meet the heads of the operating department.

In the evening the railroad men were to call on their guests at the train. This was what Glover had hoped he should escape until Bucks arriving in the morning asked him not only to attend the

reception but to pilot Mr. Brock's own party through a long mountain trip. To consent to the former request after agreeing to the latter was of slight consequence.

In the evening the special train twinkling across the yard looked as pretty as a dream. The luxury of the appointments, subdued by softened lights, and the simple hospitality of the Pittsburgers—those people who understand so well how to charm and how to repel—was a new note to the mountain men. If self-consciousness was felt by the least of them at the door it could hardly pass Mr. Brock within; his cordiality was genuine.

Following Bucks came some of his mountain staff, whom he introduced to the men whose interests they now represented. Morris Blood, the superintendent, was among those he brought forward, and he presented him as a young railroad man and a rising one. Glover followed because he was never very far from the mountain superintendent and the general manager when the two were in sight.

For Glover there was an uncomfortable moment in prospect, and it came almost at once. Mr. Brock, in meeting him as the chief of construction who was to take the party on the mountain trip, left his place and took him with Blood black to his own car to be introduced to his sister, Mrs.

Whitney. The younger Miss Brock, Marie, the invalid, a sweet-faced girl, rose to meet the two men. Mrs. Whitney introduced them to Miss Donner. At the table Gertrude Brock was watching a waiter from the dining-car who was placing a coffee urn.

She turned to meet the young men that were coming forward with her father, and Glover thought the awful moment was upon him; yet it happened that he was never to be introduced to Gertrude Brock.

Marie was already engaging him where he stood with gentle questions, and to catch them he had to bend above her. When the waiter went away, Morris Blood was helping Gertrude Brock to complete her arrangements. Others came up; the moment passed. But Glover was conscious all the time of this graceful girl who was so frankly cordial to those near her and so oblivious of him.

He heard her laughing voice in her conversation with his friends and noted in the utterance of her sister and her aunt the same unusual inflections that he had first heard from her in his office. To his surprise these Eastern women were very easy to talk to. They asked about the mountains, and as their train conductor had long ago hinted when himself apologizing for mountain stories, well

told but told at second hand—Glover knew the mountains.

Discussing afterward the man that was to plan the summer trip for them, Louise Donner wished it might have been the superintendent, because he was a Boston Tech man.

"Oh, but I think Mr. Glover is going to be interesting," declared Mrs. Whitney. "He drawls and I like that sort of men; there's always something more to what they say, after you think they're done, don't you know? He drank two cups of coffee, didn't he, Gertrude? Didn't you like him?"

"The tall one? I didn't notice; he is amazingly homely, isn't he?"

"Don't abuse him, for he is delightful," interposed Marie.

"I accused him right soon of being a Southerner," Mrs. Whitney went on. "He admitted he was a Missourian. When I confessed I liked his drawl he told me I ought to hear his brother, a lawyer, who stutters. Mr. Glover says he wins all his cases through sympathy. He stumbles along until everyone is absolutely convinced that the poor fellow would have a perfectly splendid case if he could only stammer through it; then, of course, he gets the verdict."

The party had not completed the first day

out of Medicine Bend under Glover's care before they realized that Mrs. Whitney was right. Glover could talk and he could listen. With the men it was mining or railroading or shooting. If things lagged with the ladies he had landmarks or scenery or early-day stories. With Mrs. Whitney he could in extremity discuss St. Louis. Marie Brock he could please by placing her in marvelious spots for sketching. As for Gertrude and Louise Donner the men of their own party left them no dull moments.

The first week took the party north into the park country. Two days of the time, on horses, partly, put everyone in love with the Rockies. On Saturday they reached the main line again, and at Sleepy Cat, Superintendent Blood joined the party for the desert run to the Heart Mountains. Glover already felt the fatigue of the unusual week, nor could any ingenuity make the desert interesting to strenuous people. Its beauties are contemplative rather than pungent, and the travellers were frankly advised to fall back on books and ping-pong. Crawling across an interminable alkali basin in the late afternoon their train was laid out a long time by a freight wreck.

Weary of the car, Gertrude Brock, after the sun had declined, was walking alone down the track when Glover came in sight. She started for the

train, but Glover easily overtook her. Since he had joined the party they had not exchanged one word.

"I wonder whether you have ever seen anything like these, Miss Brock?" he asked, coming up to her. She turned; he had a handful of small, long-stemmed flowers of an exquisite blue.

"How beautiful!" she exclaimed, moved by surprise. "What are they?"

"Desert flowers."

"Such a blue."

"You expressed a regret this morning——"

"Oh, you heard——"

"I overheard——"

"What are they called?"

"I haven't an idea. But once in the Sioux country—" They were at the car-step. "Marie? See here," she called to her sister within.

"Won't you take them?" asked Glover.

"No, no. I——"

"With an apology for my——"

"Marie, dear, do look here——"

"—Stupidity the other day?"

"How shall I ever reach that step?" she exclaimed, breaking in upon her own words and obstinately buffeting his own as she gazed with more than necessary dismay at the high vestibule tread.

"Would you hold the flowers a moment—" he asked—her sister appeared at the door—"so I

may help you?" continued the patient railroad man.

"See, Marie, these dear flowers!" Marie clapped her hands as she ran forward. He held the flowers up. "Are they for me?" she cried.

"Will you take them?" he asked, as she bent over the guard-rail. "Oh, gladly." He turned instantly, but Gertrude had gained the step. "Thank you, thank you," exclaimed Marie. "What is their name, Mr. Glover?"

"I don't know any name for them except an Indian name. The Sioux, up in their country, call them sky-eyes."

"Sky-eyes! *Isn't* that dear? sky-eyes."

"You are heated," continued Marie, looking at him, "you have walked a long way. Where in all this desolate, desolate country could you find flowers such as these?"

"Back a little way in a cañon."

"Are there many in a desert like this?"

"I know of none—at least within many miles—yet there may be others in nearby hiding-places. The desert is full of surprises."

"You are so warm, are you not coming up to sit down while I get a bowl?"

"I will go forward, thank you, and see when we are to get away. Your sister," he added, looking evenly at Marie as Gertrude stood beside her,

"asked this morning why there were no flowers in this country, and while we were delayed I happened to recollect that cañon and the sky-eyes."

"I think your stupid man the most interesting we have met since we left home, Gertrude," remarked Marie at her embroidery after dinner.

"I told you he would be," said Mrs. Whitney, suppressing a yawn. Gertrude was playing ping-pong with Doctor Lanning. "But isn't he homely?" she exclaimed, sending a cut ball into the doctor's watch-chain.

Louise returned soon with Allen Harrison from the forward car.

"The programme for the evening is arranged," she announced, "and it's fine. We are to have a big campfire over near that butte—right out under the stars. And Mr. Blood is going to tell a story, and while he's telling it, Mr. Glover—oh, drop your ping-pong, won't you, and listen—has promised to make taffy and we are to pull it—won't that be jolly? and then the coyotes are to howl."

A little later all left the car together. Above the copper edge of the desert ranges the moon was rising full and it brought the nearer buttes up across the stretches of the night like sentinels. In the sky a multitude of stars trembled, and wind springing from the south fanned the fire growing on the plateau just off the right of way.

The party disposed themselves in camp-chairs and on ties about the big fire. Near at hand, Glover, who already had a friend in Clem, the cook, was feeding chips into a little blaze under a kettle slung with his taffy mixture, which the women in turn inspected, asked questions about, and commented sceptically upon.

Doctor Lanning brought his banjo, and when the party had settled low about the fire it helped to keep alive the talk. Every few minutes the taffy and the coyotes were demanded in turn, and Glover was kept busy apologizing for the absence of the wolves and the slowness of his kettle, under which he fed the small chips regularly.

As the night air grew sharper more wraps were called for. When Doctor Lanning and Mrs. Whitney started after them they asked Gertrude what they should bring her, but she said she needed nothing.

As she sat, she could see Glover, her sister Marie on a stool beside him, watching the boiling taffy. With one foot doubled under him for a seat, and an elbow supported on his knee he steadied himself like a camp cook behind his modest fire; but even as he crouched the blaze threw him up astonishingly tall. Heedless of the chatter around the big fire the man whose business was to bridle rivers, fight snowslides, raze granite

hills, and dispute for their dizzy passes with the bighorn and the bear, bent patiently above his pot of molasses, a coaxing stick in one hand and a careful chip in the other.

"Where, pray, Mr. Glover, did you learn that?" demanded Marie Brock. He had been explaining the chemical changes that follow each stage of the boiling in sugar. "I learned the taffy business from the old negro mammy that 'raised' me down on the Mississippi, Aunt Chloe. She taught me everything I know—except mathematics—and mathematics I don't know anyway." Mrs. Whitney was distributing the wraps. "I would have brought your Newmarket if I could have found it, Gertrude."

"Her Newmarket!" exclaimed Allen Harrison. "Gertrude hasn't told the Newmarket story, eh? She threw it over a tramp asleep in the rain down at the Spider Water bridge."

"What?"

"—And was going to disown me because I wouldn't give up my overcoat for a tarpaulin."

"Gertrude Brock!" exclaimed Mrs. Whitney. "Your Newmarket! Then you deserve to freeze," she declared, settling under her fur cape. "What *will* she do next? Now, Mr. Blood, we are all here; what about that story?"

Morris Blood turned. Glover, Marie Brock

watching, tested the foaming candy. Doctor Lanning, on a cushion, strummed his banjo.

In front of Gertrude, Harrison, inhaling a cigarette, stretched before the fire. Declining a stool, Gertrude was sitting on a chair of ties. One, projecting at her side, made a rest for her elbow and she reclined her head upon her hand as she watched the flames leap.

"The incident Miss Donner asked about occurred when I was despatching," began the superintendent.

"Oh, are you a despatcher, too?" asked Louise, clasping her hands upon her knee as she leaned forward.

"They would hardly trust me with a train-sheet now; this was some time ago."

CHAPTER IV.

AS THE DESPATCHER SAW

"IF you can recollect the blizzard that Roscoe Conkling went down in one March day in the streets of New York, it will give you the date; possibly call to your mind the storm. I had the River Division then, and we got through the whole winter without a single tie-up of consequence until March.

"The morning was still as June. When the sky went heavy at noon it looked more like a spring shower than a snow-storm; only, I noticed over at the government building they were flying a black flag splashed with a red centre. I had not seen it before for years, and I asked for ploughs on every train out after two o'clock.

"Even then there was no wickedness abroad; it was coming fairly heavy in big flakes, but lying quiet as apple-blossoms. Toward four o'clock I left the office for the roundhouse, and got just about half-way across the yard when the wind veered like a scared semaphore. I had left the

depot in a snow-storm; I reached the roundhouse in a blizzard.

"There was no time to wait to get back to the keys. I telephoned orders over from the house, and the boys burned the wires, east and west, with warnings. When the wind went into the north that day at four o'clock, it was murder pure and simple, with the snow sweeping the flat like a shroud and the thermometer water-logged at zero.

"All night it blew, with never a minute's let-up. By ten o'clock half our wires were down, trains were failing all over the division, and before midnight every plough on the line was bucking snow—and the snow was coming harder. We had given up all idea of moving freight, and were centring everything on the passenger trains, when a message came from Beverly that the fast mail was off track in the cut below the hill, and I ordered out the wrecking gang and a plough battery for the run down.

"It was a fearful night to make up a train in a hurry—as much as a man's life was worth to work even slow in the yard a night like that. But what limit is set to a switchman's courage I have never known, because I've never known one to balk at a yardmaster's order.

"I went to work clearing the line, and forgot all about everything outside the train-sheet till a car-

tink came running in with word that a man was hurt in the yard.

"Some men get used to it; I never do. As much as I have seen of railroad life, the word that a man's hurt always hits me in the same place. Slipping into an ulster, I pulled a storm-cap over my ears and hurried down stairs buttoning my coat. The arc-lights, blinded in the storm, swung wild across the long yard, and the wind sung with a scream through the telegraph wires. Stumbling ahead, the big car-tink, facing the storm, led me to where between the red and the green lamps a dozen men hovered close to the gangway of a switch engine. The man hurt lay under the forward truck of the tender.

"They had just got the wrecking train made up, and this man, running forward after setting a switch, had flipped the tender of the backing engine and slipped from the footboard. When I bent over him, I saw he was against it. He knew it, too, for the minute they shut off and got to him he kept perfectly still, asking only for a priest.

"I tried every way I could think of to get him free from the wheels. Two of us crawled under the tender to try to figure it out. But he lay so jammed between the front wheel and the hind one, and tender trucks are so small and the wheels so close together that to save our lives we could

neither pull ahead nor back the engine without further mutilating him.

"As I talked to him I took his hand and tried to explain that to free him we should have to jack up the truck. He heard, he understood, but his eyes, glittering like the eyes of a wounded animal with shock, wandered uneasily while I spoke, and when I had done, he closed them to grapple with the pain. Presently a hand touched my shoulder; the priest had come, and throwing open his coat knelt beside us. He was a spare old man—none too good a subject himself, I thought, for much exposure like that—but he did not seem to mind. He dropped on his knees and, with both hands in the snow, put his head in behind the wheel close to the man's face. What they said to each other lasted only a moment, and all the while the boys were keying like madmen at the jacks to ease the wheel that had crushed the switchman's thigh. When they got the truck partly free, they lifted the injured man back a little where we could all see his face. They were ready to do more, but the priest, wiping the water and snow from the failing man's lips and forehead, put up his fingers to check them.

"The wind, howling around the freight-cars strung about us, sucked the guarded lantern flames up into blue and green flickers in the globes; they

lighted the priest's face as he took off his hat and laid it beside him, and lighted the switchman's eyes looking steadily up from the rail. The snow, curling and eddying across the little blaze of lamps, whitened everything alike, tender and wheel and rail, the jackscrews, the bars, and the shoulders and caps of the men. The priest bent forward again and touched the lips and the forehead of the switchman with his thumb: then straightening on his knees he paused a moment, his eyes lifted up, raised his hand and slowly signing through the blinding flakes the form of the cross, gave him the sacrament of the dying.

"I have forgotten the man's name. I have never seen the old priest, before or since. But, sometime, a painter will turn to the railroad life. When he does, I may see from his hand such a picture as I saw at that moment—the night, the storm, the scant hair of the priest blown in the gale, the men bared about him; the hush of the death moment; the wrinkled hand raised in the last benediction."

CHAPTER V

AN EMERGENCY CALL

IN the morning the Brock special bathed in sunshine lay in the Bear Dance yard. When it was learned at breakfast that during the night Morris Blood had disappeared there was a protest. He had taken a train east, Glover told them.

"But you should not have let him run away," objected Marie Brock, "we've barely made his acquaintance. I was going to ask him ever so many questions about mines this morning. Tell him, Mr. Glover, when you telegraph, that he has had a peremptory recall, will you? We want him for dinner to-morrow night; papa and Mr. Bucks are to join us, you know."

Mr. Brock arrived the following evening but the general manager failed them, and it was long after hope of Morris Blood had been given up that Glover brought him in with apologies for his late arrival.

The two cars were sidetracked at Cascade, the heart of the sightseeing country, and Glover had

a trip laid out for the early morning on horses up Cabin Creek.

When he sat down to explain to Marie where he meant to take the party the following day Gertrude Brock had a book under the banquet lamp at the lower end of the car. The doctor and Harrison with Mrs. Whitney were gathered about Louise, who among the couch pillows was reading hands. As Morris Blood, after some talk with Mr. Brock, approached, Louise nodded to him. "We shall take no apologies for spoiling our dinner party," said she, "but you may sit down. I haven't been able, Mr. Blood, to get your story out of my head since you told it: none of us have. Do you believe in palmistry? Now, Mr. Harrison, do sit still till I finish your hand. Oh, here's another engagement in it! Why, Allen Harrison!"

"How many is that?" asked Gertrude, looking over.

"Three; and here is further excitement for you, Mr. Harrison——"

"How soon?" demanded Allen.

"Very soon, I should think; just as soon as you get home."

"Well timed," said Marie; she and Glover had come up. "I think that's all, this time," concluded Louise, studying the lines carefully. "Go

slow on mining for one year, remember." She looked at Morris Blood. "Am I to have the pleasure of reading your hand?"

"There isn't a bit of excitement in my hand, Miss Donner, no fortunes, no adventures, no engagements——"

"You mean in your life. Very good; that's just the sort of hand I love to read. The excitement is all ahead. Really I should like to read your hand."

"If you insist," he said, putting out his left hand.

"Your right, please," smiled Louise.

"I have no right," he answered. She looked mystified, but held out her hand smilingly for his right.

"I have no right hand," he repeated, smiling, too.

None had observed before that the superintendent never offered his hand in greeting. A conscious instant fell on the group. It was barely an instant, for Glover, who heard, turned at once from an answer to Marie Brock and laying a hand on his companion's shoulder spoke easily to Louise. "He gave his right hand for me once, Miss Donner, that's the reason he has none. May I offer mine for him?"

He put out his own right hand as he asked, and

his lightly serious words bridged the momentary embarrassment.

"Oh, I can read either hand," laughed Louise, recovering and putting Glover's hand aside. "Let me have your left, Mr. Blood—your turn presently, Mr. Glover. Be seated. Now this is the sort of hand I like," she declared, leaning forward as she looked into the left—"full of romance, Mr. Blood. Here is an affair of the heart the very first thing. Now don't laugh, this is serious." She studied the palm a moment and glanced mischievously around her. "If I were to disclose all the delicate romances I find here," she declared with an air of mystery, "they would laugh at both of us. I'm not going to give them a chance. I give private readings, too, Mr. Blood, and you shall have a private reading at the other end of the car after a while. Now is there another 'party'? Oh, to be sure; come, Mr. Glover, are all railroad men romantic? This is growing interesting—let me see your palm. Oh!"

"Now what have I done?" asked Glover as Louise, studying his palm, started. "I have changed my name—I admit that; but I have always denied killing anyone in the States. Are you going to tell the real facts? Won't someone lend *me* a hand for a few minutes? Or may I withdraw this entry before exposure?"

"Mr. Glover! of *all* the hands! I'm not surprised you were chosen to show the sights. There's something happening in your hand every few minutes. Adventures, heart affairs, fortunes, perils—such a life-line, Mr. Glover. On my word there you are hanging by a hair—a hair—on the verge of eternity——"

Glover laughed softly.

"Oh, come, Louise," protested Mrs. Whitney. "Touch on lighter lines, please."

"Lighter lines! Why, Mr. Glover's heart-line is a perfect cañon." The laughter did not daunt her. "A perfect cañon. I've read about hands like this, but I never saw one. No more to-night, Mr. Glover, you are too exciting."

"But about hanging on the verge—has it anything to do with a lynching, do you think, Miss Donner?" asked Glover. "The hair rope might be a lariat——"

"Mr. Glover!"—the train conductor opened the car door. "Is Mr. Glover in this car?"

"Yes."

"A message."

"May I be excused for a moment?" said Glover, rising.

"What did I tell you?" exclaimed Louise, "a telegram! Something has happened already."

CHAPTER VI

THE CAT AND THE RAT

AT five o'clock that evening, snow was falling at Medicine Bend, but Callahan, as he studied the weather bulletins, found consolation in the fact that it was not raining, and resting his heels on a table littered with train-sheets he forced the draft on a shabby brier and meditated.

There were times when snow had been received with strong words at the Wickiup: but when summer fairly opened Callahan preferred snow to rain as strongly as he preferred genuine Lone Jack to the spurious compounds that flooded the Western market.

The chief element of speculation in his evening reflections was as to what was going on west of the range, for Callahan knew through cloudy experience that what happens on one side of a mountain chain is no evidence as to what is doing on the other—and by species of warm weather depravity that night something was happening west of the range.

"It is curious," mused Callahan, as Morrison,

the head operator, handed him some McCloud messages—"curious, that we get nothing from Sleepy Cat."

Sleepy Cat, it should be explained, is a new town on the West End; not only that, but a division town, and though one may know something about the Mountain Division he may yet be puzzled at Callahan's mention of Sleepy Cat. When gold was found in the Pilot range and camps grew up and down Devil's Gap like mushrooms, a branch was run from Sleepy Cat through the Pilot country, and the tortoise-like way station became at once a place of importance. It takes its name from the neighboring mountain around the base of which winds the swift Rat River. At Sleepy Cat town the main line leaves the Rat, and if a tenderfoot brakeman ask a reservation buck why the mountain is called Sleepy Cat the Indian will answer, always the same, "It lets the Rat run away."

"Now it's possible," suggested Hughie Morrison, looking vaguely at the stove, "that the wires are down."

"Nonsense," objected Callahan.

"It is raining at Soda Sink," persisted Morrison, mildly.

"What?" demanded the general superintendent, pulling his pipe from his mouth. Hughie Mor-

rison kept cool. His straight, black hair lay boyishly smooth across his brow. There was no guile in his expression even though he had stunned Callahan, which was precisely what he had intended. "It is raining at Soda Sink," he repeated.

Now there is no day in the mountains that goes back of the awful tradition concerning rain at Soda Sink. Before Tom Porter, first manager; before Brodie, who built the bridges; before Sikes, longest in the cab; before Pat Francis, oldest of conductors, runs that tradition about rain at the Sink—which is desert absolute—where it never does rain and never should. When it rains at Soda Sink, this say the Medicine men, the Cat will fall on the Rat. It is Indian talk as old as the foothills.

Of course no railroad man ever gave much heed to Indian talk; how, for instance, could a mountain fall on a river? Yet so the legend ran, and there being one superstitious man on the force at Medicine Bend one man remembered it—Hughie Morrison.

Callahan studied the bulletin to which the operator called his attention and resumed his pipe sceptically, but he did make a suggestion. "See if you can't get Sleepy Cat, Hughie, and find out whether that is so."

Morris Blood was away with the Pittsburgers and Callahan had foolishly consented to look after

his desk for a few days. At the moment that Morrison took hold of the key Giddings opened the door from the despatchers' room. "Mr. Callahan, there's a message coming from Francis, conductor of Number Two. They've had a cloudburst on Dry Dollar Creek," he said, excitedly; "twenty feet of water came down Rat Cañon at five o'clock. The track's under four feet in the cañon."

As a pebble striking an anthill stirs into angry life a thousand startled workers, so a mountain washout startles a division and concentrates upon a single point the very last reserve of its activities and energies.

For thirty minutes the wires sung with Callahan's messages. When his special for a run to the Rat Cañon was ready all the extra yardmen and both roadmasters were in the caboose; behind them fumed a second section with orders to pick up along the way every section man as they followed. It was hard on eight o'clock when Callahan stepped aboard. They double-headed for the pass, and not till they pulled up with their pony truck facing the water at the mouth of the big cañon did they ease their pace.

In the darkness they could only grope. Smith Young, roadmaster of the Pilot branch, an old mountain boy, had gone down from Sleepy Cat

before dark, and crawling over the rocks in the dusk had worked his way along the cañon walls to the scene of the disaster.

Just below where Dry Dollar Creek breaks into the Rat the cañon is choked on one side by a granite wall two hundred feet high. On the other, a sheer spur of Sleepy Cat Mountain is thrust out like a paw against the river. It was there that the wall of water out of Dry Dollar had struck the track and scoured it to the bedrock. Ties, steel, ballast, riprap, roadbed, were gone, and where the heavy construction had run below the paw of Sleepy Cat the river was churning in a channel ten feet deep.

The best news Young had was that Agnew, the division engineer who happened to be at Sleepy Cat, had made the inspection with him and had already returned to order in men and material for daybreak.

Leaving the roadmasters to care for their incoming forces, Callahan, with Smith Young's men for guides, took the footpath on the south side to the head of the cañon, where, above the break, an engine was waiting to run him to Sleepy Cat. When he reached the station Agnew was up at the material yard, and Callahan sat down in his shirt sleeves to take reports on train movements. The despatchers were annulling, holding the freights

and distributing passenger trains at eating stations. But an hour's work at the head-breaking problem left the division, Callahan thought, in worse shape than when the planning began, and he got up from the keg in a mental whirl when Duffy at Medicine Bend sent a body blow in a long message supplementary to his first report.

"Bear Dance reports the fruit extras making a very fast run. First train of eighteen cars has just pulled in: there are seven more of these fruit extras following close, should arrive at Sleepy Cat at four A.M."

Callahan turned from the message with his hand in his hair. Of all bad luck this was the worst. The California fruit trains, not due for twenty-four hours, coming in a day ahead of time with the Mountain Division tied up by the worst washout it had ever seen. In a heat he walked out of the operators' office to find Agnew; the two men met near the water tank.

"Hello, Agnew. This puts us against it, doesn't it? How soon can you give us a track?" asked Callahan, feverishly.

Agnew was the only man on the division that was always calm. He was thorough, practical, and after he had cut his mountain teeth in the Peace River disaster, a hardheaded man at his work.

"It will take forty-eight hours after I get my material here——"

"Forty-eight hours!" echoed Callahan. "Why, man, we shall have eight trains of California fruit here by four o'clock."

"I'm on my way to order in the filling, now," said Agnew, "and I shall push things to the limit, Mr. Callahan."

"Limit, yes, your limit—but what about my limit? Forty-eight hours' delay will put every car of that fruit into market rotten. I've got to have some kind of a track through there—any kind on earth will do—but I've got to have it by to-morrow night."

"To-morrow night?"

"To-morrow night."

Agnew looked at him as a sympathizing man looks at a lunatic, and calmly shook his head. "I can't get rock here till to-morrow morning. What is the use talking impossibilities?"

Callahan ground his heel in the ballast. Agnew only asked him if he realized what a hole there was to fill. "It's no use dumping gravel in there," he explained patiently, "the river will carry it out faster than flat cars can carry it in."

Callahan waved his hand. "I've got to have track there by to-morrow night."

"I've got to dump a hundred cars of rock in

there before we shall have anything to lay track on; and I've got to pick the rock up all the way from here to Goose River."

They walked together to the station.

When the night grew too dark for Callahan he had but one higher thought—Bucks. Bucks was five hundred miles away at McCloud, but he already had the particulars and was waiting at a key ready to take up the trouble of his favorite division. Callahan at the wire in Sleepy Cat told his story, and Bucks at the other end listened and asked questions. He listened to every detail of the disaster, to the cold hard figures of Agnew's estimates—which nothing could alter, jot or tittle—and to Callahan's despairing question as to how he could possibly save the unlooked-for avalanche of fruit.

For some time after the returns were in, Bucks was silent; silent so long that the copper-haired man twisted in his chair, looked vacantly around the office and chewed a cigar into strings. Then the sounder at his hand clicked. He recognized Bucks sending in the three words lightly spelled on his ear and jumped from his seat. Just three words Bucks had sent and signed off. What galvanized Callahan was that the words were so simple, so all-covering, and so easy. "Why didn't *I* think of that?" groaned Callahan, mentally.

Then he reflected that he was nothing but a redheaded Irishman, anyway, while Bucks was a genius. It never showed more clearly, Callahan thought, than when he received the three words, "Send for Glover."

CHAPTER VII

TIME BEING MONEY

SLEEPY CAT town was but just rubbing its eyes next morning when the Brock train pulled in from Cascade. Clouds rolling loosely across the mountains were pushing the night into the west, and in the east wind promise of day followed, soft and cool.

On the platform in the gray light three men were climbing into the gangway of a switch-engine, the last man so long and so loosely put together that he was taking, as he always took when he tried to get into small quarters, the chaffing of his companions on his size. He smiled languidly at Callahan's excited greeting, and as they ran down the yard listened without comment to the story of the washout. No words were needed to convey to Glover or to Blood the embarrassment of the situation. Freight trains crowded every track in the yard, and the block of twelve hours indicated what a two-day tie-up would mean. In the cañon the roadmasters were already taking measure-

ments and section men were lining up track that had been lifted and wrenched by the water. Callahan and Blood did the talking, but when they left the flooded roadbed and Glover took a way up the cañon wall it became apparent what the mountain engineer's long legs were for. He led, a quick, sure climber, and if he meant by rapidly scaling the bowlders to shut off Callahan's talk the intent was effective. Nothing more was said till the three men, followed by the roadmasters, had gained a ledge, fifty feet above the water, that commanded for a quarter of a mile a view of the cañon.

They were standing above the mouth of Dry Dollar Creek, opposite the point of rocks called the Cat's Paw, and Glover, pulling his hat brim into a perspective, looked up and down the river. The roadmasters had taken some measurements and these they offered him, but he did no more than listen while they read their figures as if mentally comparing them with notes in his memory. Once he questioned a figure, but it was not till the roadmaster insisted he was right that Glover drew from one of his innumerable pockets an old field-book and showed the man where he had made his error of ten feet in the disputed measurement.

"Bucks said last night you knew all this track work," remarked Callahan.

"I helped Hailey a little here when he rebuilt three years ago. The track was put in then as well as it ever can be put in. The fact simply is this, Callahan, we shall never be safe here. What must be done is to tunnel Sleepy Cat, get out of the infernal cañon with the main line and use this for the spur around the tunnel. When your message came last night, Morris and I took the chance to tell Mr. Brock so, and he is here this morning to see what things look like after a cloudburst. A tunnel will save two miles of track and all the double-heading."

"But, Glover, what's that got to do with this fruit? Confound your tunnel, what I want is a track. By heavens, if it's going to take three days to get one in we might as well dump a hundred cars of fruit into the river now—and Bucks is looking to *you* to save them."

"Looking to me?" echoed Glover, raising his brows. "What's the matter with Agnew?"

"Oh, hang Agnew!"

"If you like. But he is in charge of this division. I can't do anything discourteous or unprofessional, Callahan."

"You are not required to."

"It looks very much as if I am being called in to instruct Agnew how to do his work. He is a perfectly competent engineer."

"That point has been covered. Bucks had a long talk with Agnew over the wire last night. He is needed all the time at the Blackwood bridge and he is relieved here when you arrive. Now what's the matter with you?"

"Nothing whatever if that is the situation. I'd much rather keep out of it, but there isn't work enough here for two engineers.

"What do you mean?"

"This isn't very bad."

"Not very bad! Well, how much time do you want to put a track in here?"

Glover's eyes were roaming up and down the cañon. "How much can you give me?" he asked.

"Till to-night."

Glover looked at his watch. "Then get two hundred and fifty men in here inside of an hour."

"We've picked up about seventy-five section men so far, but there aren't two hundred and fifty men within a hundred miles."

Glover pointed north. "Ed Smith's got two hundred men not over three miles from here on the irrigation ditch."

"That only shows I've no business in this game," remarked Callahan, looking at Morris Blood. "This is where you take hold."

Blood nodded. "Leave that to me. Let's have

the orders all at once, Ab. Say where you want headquarters."

The engineer stretched a finger toward the point of rocks across the cañon. "Right above the Cat's Paw."

"Tell Bill Dancing to cut in the wrecking instrument and put an operator over there for Glover's orders," directed Blood, turning to Smith Young.

"I'm off for something to eat," said Callahan, "and by the way, what shall I tell Bucks about the chances?"

"Can you get Ed Smith's outfit?" asked Glover, speaking to Blood. "Well, I know you can—Ed's a Denver man." He meditated another moment; "We need his whole outfit, mind you."

"I'll get it or resign. If I succeed, when can you get a train through?"

"By midnight." Callahan staggered. Glover raised his finger. "If you back off the ledge they will need a new general superintendent."

"By midnight?"

"I think so."

"You can't get your rock in by that time?"

"I reckon."

"Agnew says it will take a hundred cars."

"That's not far out of the way. On flat cars

you won't average much over ten yards to the car, will you, Morris?"

Like two wary gamblers Callahan and the chief of construction on the mountain lines coldly eyed each other, Glover standing pat and the general superintendent disinclined through many experiences to call.

"I'm not doing the talking now," said Callahan at length with a sidewise glance, "but if you get a hundred cars of rock into that hole by twelve o'clock to-night—not to speak of laying steel—you can have my job, old man."

"Then look up another right away, for I'll have the rock in the river long before that. Now don't rubber, but get after the men and the drills——"

"The drills?"

"I said the whole outfit."

"Would it be proper to ask what you are going to drill?"

"Perfectly proper." Glover pointed again to the shelving wall across the river. "It will save time and freight to tumble the Cat's Paw into the river—there's ten times the rock we need right there—I can dump a thousand yards where we need it in thirty seconds after I get my powder in. That will give us our foundation and your road-masters can lay a track over it in six hours that will carry your fruit—I wouldn't recommend it

for dining-cars, but it will do for plums and cherries. And by the way, Morris," called Glover—Blood already twenty feet away was scrambling down the path—"if Ed Smith's got any giant powder borrow sticks enough to spring thirty or forty holes with, will you? I've got plenty of black up at Pilot. You can order it down by the time we are ready to blast."

In another hour the cañon looked as if a hive of bees were swarming on the Cat's Paw. With shovels, picks, bars, hammers, and drills, hearty in miners' boots and pied in woollen shirts the first of Ed Smith's men were clambering into place. The field telegraph had been set up on the bench above the point: every few moments a new batch of irrigation men appeared stringing up the ledge, and with the roadmasters as lieutenants, Glover, on the apex of the low spur of the mountain, taking reports and giving orders, surveyed his improvised army.

At the upper and lower ends of the track where the roadbed had not completely disappeared the full force of section men, backed by the irrigation laborers, were busy patching the holes.

At the point where the break was complete and the Rat River was viciously licking the vertical face of the rock a crew of men, six feet above the track level, were drilling into the first

ledge a set of six-foot holes. On the next receding ledge, twelve feet above the old track level, a second crew were tamping a set of holes to be sunk twelve feet. Above them the drills were cutting into the third ledge, and still higher and farther back, at twenty feet, the largest of all the crews was sinking the eighteen-foot holes to complete the fracture of the great wall. Above the murmuring of the steel rang continually the calls of the foremen, and hour after hour the shock of the drills churned up and down the narrow cañon.

During each hour Glover was over every foot of the work, and inspecting the track building. If a track boss couldn't understand what he wanted the engineer could take a pick or a bar and give the man an object lesson. He patrolled the cañon walls, the roadmasters behind him, with so good an eye for loose bowlders, and fragments such as could be moved readily with a gad, that his assistants before a second round had spotted every handy chunk of rock within fifty feet of the water. He put his spirit into the men and they gave their work the enthusiasm of soldiers. But closest of all Glover watched the preparations for the blast on the Cat's Paw.

Morris Blood in the meantime was sweeping the division for stone, ballast, granite, gravel, anything

that would serve to dump on Glover's rock after the blast, and the two men were conferring on the track about the supplies when a messenger appeared with word for Glover that Mr. Brock's party were coming down the cañon.

When Glover intercepted the visitors they had already been guided to the granite bench where his headquarters were fixed. With Mr. Brock had come the young men, Miss Donner, and Mrs. Whitney. Mrs. Whitney signalized her arrival by sitting down on a chest of dynamite—having intimidated the modest headquarters custodian by asking for a chair so imperiously that he was glad to walk away at her suggestion that he hunt one up—though there was not a chair within several miles. It had been no part of Glover's plan to receive his guests at that point, and his first efforts after the greetings were to coax them away from the interest they expressed in the equipment of an emergency headquarters, and get them back to where the track crossed the river. But when the young people learned that the blue-eyed boy at the little table on the rock could send a telegram or a cablegram for them to any part of the world, each insisted on putting a message through for the fun of the thing, and even Mrs. Whitney could hardly be coaxed from the illimitable possibilities just under her.

With a feeling of relief he got them away from the giant powder which Ed Smith's men were still bringing in, and across the river to the ledge that commanded the whole scene, and was safely removed from its activities.

Glover took ten minutes to point out to the president of the system the difficulties that would always confront the operating department in the cañon. He charted clearly for Mr. Brock the whole situation, with the hope that when certain very heavy estimates went before the directors one man at least would understand the necessity for them. Mr. Brock was a good questioner, and his interest turned constantly from the general observations offered by Glover to the work immediately in hand, which the engineer had no mind to exploit. The young people, however, were determined to see the blast, and it was only by strongly advising an early dinner and promising that they should have due notice of the blast that Glover got rid of his visitors at all.

He returned with them to the caboose in which they had come down, and when he got back to the work the big camp kettles were already slung along the bench, and the engine bringing the car of black powder was steaming slowing into the upper cañon. On a flat bowlder back of the cooks, Morris Blood, Ed Smith, and the roadmasters

were sitting down to coffee and sandwiches, and Glover joined them. Men in relays were eating at the camp and dynamiters were picking their way across the face of the Cat's Paw with the giant powder. The engineers were still at their coffee-fire when the scream of a locomotive whistle came through the cañon from below. Blood looked up. "There's one of the fast mail engines, probably the 1026. Who in the world has brought her up?"

"More than likely," suggested Glover, finishing his coffee, "it's Bucks."

CHAPTER VIII

SPLITTING THE PAW

PRECEDED by a track boss along the ledges where the blasting crew was already putting down the dynamite, a man almost as large as Glover and rigged in a storm cap and ulster made his way toward the camp headquarters. The mountain men sprang to their feet with a greeting for the general manager—it was Bucks.

He took Blood's welcome with a laugh, nodded to the roadmasters, and pulling his cap from his head, turned to grasp Glover's hand.

"I hear you're going to spoil some of our scenery, Ab. I thought I'd run up and see how much government land you were going to move without a permit. Glad you got down so promptly. Callahan had nervous prostration for a while last night. I told him you'd have some sort of a trick in your bag, but I didn't suppose you would spring the side of a mountain on us. Am I to have any coffee or not? What are you eating, dynamite? Why, there's Ed Smith—what are you hanging back in the dark for, Ed? Come out here and

show youreself. It was like you to lend us your men. If the boys forget it, I sha'n't."

"I'd rather see you than a hundred men," declared Glover.

"Then give me something to eat," suggested Bucks.

As he spoke the snappy, sharp reports of exploding dynamite could be heard; they were springing the drill holes. Bucks sitting down on the bowlder, wrapping the tails of his coat between his legs and taking coffee from Young drank while the men talked. From the box car below, Ed Smith's men were packing the black powder up the trail to the Paw. When it began going into the holes, Glover went to the ledge to oversee the charging.

In the Pittsburg train, at Sleepy Cat, an early dinner was being served to the cañon party. They had come back enthusiastic. The scenery was declared superb, and the uncertainty of the situation most satisfying. The riot of the mountain stream, which plunging now unbridled from wall to wall had scoured the deep gorge for hundreds of feet, was a moving spectacle. The activity of the swarming laborers, preparing their one tremendous answer to the insolence of the river, had behind it the excitement of a game of chance. The stake, indeed, was eight solid trains of perishable

freight, and the gambler that had staked their value and his reputation on one throw of the dice was their own easy-mannered guide.

They discussed his chances with the indifference of spectators. Doctor Lanning, the only one of the young people that had ever done anything himself, was inclined to think Glover might win out. Allen Harrison was willing to wager that trains couldn't be got across a hole like that for another twenty-four hours.

Mrs. Whitney wondered why, if Mr. Glover were really a competent man, he could not have held his position as chief engineer of the system, but Doctor Lanning explained that frequently Western men of real talent were wholly lacking in ambition and preferred a free-and-easy life to one of constant responsibility; others, again, drank—and this suggestion opened a discussion as to whether Western men could possibly do more drinking than Eastern men, and transact business at all.

While the discussion proceeded there came a telegram from Glover telling Doctor Lanning that the blast would be made about seven o'clock. Preparations to start were completed as the company rose from the table, and Gertrude Brock and Marie were urged to join the party. Marie consented, but Gertrude had a new book and would not leave

it, and when the others started she joined her father and Judge Saltzer, her father's counsellor, now with them, who were dining more leisurely at their own table.

Bucks met the doctor and his party at the head of the cañon and took them to the high ledge across the river, where they had been brought by Glover in the morning. In the cañon it was already dark. Men were eating around campfires, and in the narrow strip of eastern sky between the walls the moon was rising. Work-trains with signal lanterns were moving above and below the break, dumping ballast behind the track layers. At a safe distance from the coming blast a dozen headlights from the roundhouse were being prepared, and the car-tinks from Sleepy Cat were rigging torches for the night.

The blasting powder in twenty-pound cans was being passed from hand to hand to the chargers. Score after score of the compact cans of high explosive had been packed into the scattered holes, and as if alive to what was coming the chill air of the cañon took on the uneasiness of an atmosphere laden with electricity. Men of the operating department paced the bench impatiently, and trackmen working below in the flare of scattered torches looked up oftener from their shovels to where a chain of active figures moved on the face

of the cliff. Word passed again and again that the charging was done, but the orders came steadily from the gloom on the ledge for more powder until the last pound the engineer called for had been buried beneath his feet in the sleeping rock.

After a long delay a red light swung slowly to and fro on the ledge. From the extreme end of the cañon below the Cat's Paw came the crash of a track-torpedo, answered almost instantly by a second, above the break. It was the warning signal to get into the clear. There was a buzz of rapid movement among the laborers. In twos and threes and dozens, a ragged procession of lanterns and torches, they retreated, foremen urging the laggards, until only a single man at each end of the broken track kept within sight of the tiny red lantern on the ledge. Again it swung in a circle and again the torpedoes replied, this time all clear. The hush of a hundred voices, the silence of the bars and shovels and picks gave back to the chill cañon its loneliness, and the roar of the river rose undisturbed to the brooding night.

On the ledge Glover was alone. The final detail he was taking into his own hands. The few that could still command the point saw the red light moving, and beside it a figure vaguely outlined making its way. When the red light paused,

a spark could be seen, a sputtering blaze would run slowly from it, hesitate, flare and die. Another and another of the fuses were touched and passed. With quickening steps tier after tier was covered, until those looking saw the red light flung at last into the air. It circled high between the cañon walls in its flight and dropped like a rocket into the Rat. A muffled report from the lower tier was followed by a heavier and still a heavier one above. A creeping pang shot the heart of the granite, a dreadful awakening was upon it.

From the tier of the upmost holes came at length the terrific burst of the heavy mines. The travail of an awful instant followed, the face of the spur parted from its side, toppled an instant in the confusion of its rending and with an appalling crash fell upon the river below.

With the fragments still tumbling, the nearest men started with a cheer from their concealment. Smoke rolling white and sullen upward obscured the moon, and the cañon air, salt and sick with gases, poured over the high point on which the Pittsburgers stood. Below, torches were shooting like fireflies out of the rock. From every vantage point headlights flashed one after another unhooded on the scene, and the song of the river mingled again with the calling of the foremen.

"That ends the fireworks," remarked Bucks to

those about him. "Let us watch a moment for Mr. Glover's signal to me. As soon as he inspects he is to show signals on the Cat's Paw, and if it is a success we will return at once to Sleepy Cat."

"And by the way, Mr. Bucks, I shall expect you and Mr. Glover up to the car for my game supper. Have you arranged for him to come?"

"I have, Mrs. Whitney, thank you."

"Oh, see those pretty red lights over there now. What are they?" asked Louise, who stood with Allen Harrison.

"The signals," exclaimed Bucks. "Three fusees. Good for Glover; that means success. Shall we go?"

When the sightseers made their way out of the cañon material trains working from both ends of the break were shoving their loaded flats noisily up to the ballasting crews and the water was echoing the clang of the spike mauls, the thud of tamping-irons, the clash of picks, the splash of tumbling stone, and the ceaseless roll of shovels.

Foot by foot, length by length, the gap was shortened. Bribed by extra pay, driven by the bosses, and stimulated by the emergency, the work of the graders became an effort close to fury. Watches were already consulted and wagers were being laid between rival foremen on the moment

a train should pass the point. Above the peaks the stars glittered, and high in the sky the moon shot a path of clear light down the river itself. The camp kettles steamed constantly, and coffee strong enough to ballast eggs and primed with unusual cordials was passed every hour among the hundreds along the track.

In the lower yard at Sleepy Cat the pilot train was being made ready and the clatter of switching came into the cañon. From still further came the barking exhaust of the first-train engine waiting for orders for the cañon run.

Glover pacing the narrow bench below the camp returned again to the operator's table, and in the light of the lantern wrote a message to Medicine Bend. When it had been sent he upended an empty spike keg, and sitting down before the fire, got his back against a rock and gave himself to his thoughts. Men straggled back and forth, but none disturbed him. Some, in turn, fed the fire, some rolled themselves in their blankets and lay down to sleep, but his eyes were lost all the while in the leaping blaze.

A volleying signal of the locomotive whistles roused him. He looked at his watch and stepped to the verge of the ledge. Toward Sleepy Cat a headlight was slowly rounding the first curve. The pilot train was coming and below where he

stood he could see green lights swinging. The locomotive of the work-train was at the hind end and the roadmasters standing on the first flat car were signalling. Mauls were ringing at the last spikes when the head flat car moved cautiously out on the new track. Car after car approached, every second one bearing a flagman re-signalling to the cab as the train took the short curves of the cañon and entering the gorge rolled slowly beneath the Cat's Paw over the prostrate granite.

The trackmen parted only long enough to give way to the advancing cars. The locomotive steamed gingerly along. In the gangway stood a small, broad-hatted man, Morris Blood. He waved his lantern at Glover, and Glover caught up a hand-torch to swing an answering greeting.

Down the uncertain track could be seen at reassuring intervals the slow, green lights of the track foremen swinging all's well. The deepening drum of the steaming engine as it entered the gorge walls, the straining of the injectors, and the frequent hissing check of the air as the powerful machine restrained its moving load, was music to the tired listener above. Then, looming darkly behind the tender, surprising the onlookers, even Glover himself, came the real train. Not till the roadbuilders heard the heavy drop of the big cars on the new rail joints did they realize that

the first train of fruit was already crossing the break.

Ten minutes afterward Bucks, who was with Mr. Brock in the directors' car, had the news in a message. The manager had agreed to have Glover present for the supper which was now waiting, and for some time messengers and telegrams passed from the Brock Special to the cañon. It was not until twelve o'clock that they learned definitely through word from Morris Blood that Glover had torn his hand slightly in handling powder and had gone to Medicine Bend to have it dressed.

CHAPTER IX

A TRUCE

IF Glover's aim in disappearing had been to escape the embarrassment of Mrs. Whitney's attentions the effort was successful only in part.

Lanning and Harrison left in the morning in charge of Bill Dancing to join the hunting party in the Park, and Mr. Brock finding himself within a few hours' ride of Medicine Bend decided to run down. Late in the afternoon the Pittsburg train drew up at the Wickiup.

Gertrude and her sister left their car together to walk in the sunshine that flooded the platform, for the sun was still a little above the mountains. In front of the eating-house a fawn-colored collie racing across the lawn attracted Gertrude, and with her sister she started up the walk to make friends with him. In one of his rushes he darted up the eating-house steps and ran around to the west porch, the two young ladies leisurely following. As they turned the corner they saw their runaway crouching before a man who, with one foot on the low railing, stood leaning against a pillar. The collie was waiting for a lump of

sugar, and his master had just taken one from the pocket of his sack coat when the young ladies recognized him.

"Really, Mr. Glover, your tastes are domestic," declared Marie; "you make excellent taffy—now I find you feeding a collie." She pointed to the lump of sugar. "And how is your hand?"

"I can't get over seeing you here," said Glover, collecting himself by degrees. "When did you come? Take these chairs, won't you?"

"You, I believe, are responsible for the early resumption of traffic through the cañon," answered Marie. "Besides, nothing in our wanderings need ever cause surprise. Anyone unfortunate enough to be attached to a directors' party will end in a feeble-minded institution."

Gertrude was talking to the collie. "Isn't he beautiful, Marie?" she exclaimed. "Come here, you dear fellow. I fell in love with him the minute I saw him—to whom does he belong, Mr. Glover? Come here."

"How is your hand?" asked Marie.

"Do give Mr. Glover a chance," interposed Gertrude. "Tell me about this dog, Mr. Glover."

"He is the best dog in the world, Miss Brock. Mr. Bucks gave him to me when I first came to the mountains—we were puppies together——"

"And how about your hand?" smiled Marie.

"What is his name?" asked Gertrude.

"It wasn't a hand, it was a wrist, and it is much better, thank you—his name is Stumah."

"Stumah? How odd. Come here, Stumah. Does he mind?"

"He doesn't mind me, but no one minds me, so I forgive him that."

"Aunt Jane doesn't think you mind very well," said Marie. "Clem had a steak twice as large as usual prepared for the supper you ran away from."

"It is always my misfortune to miss good things."

Talking, Glover and Marie followed Gertrude and Stumah out on the grass and across to the big platform where an overland train had pulled in from the west. They watched the changing of the engines and the crews, and the promenade of the travellers from the Pullmans.

While Gertrude amused herself with the dog, and Marie asked questions about the locomotive, Mrs. Whitney and Louise spied them and walked over. Glover, to make his peace, was compelled to take dinner with the party in their car. The atmosphere of the special train had never seemed so attractive as on that night. To cordiality was added deference. The effect of his success in the cañon—only striking rather than remarkable—was

noticeable on Mr. Brock. At dinner, which was served at one table in the dining-car, Glover was brought by the Pittsburg magnate to sit at his own right hand, Bucks being opposite. No one may ever say that the value of resource in emergency is lost on the dynamic Mr. Brock. But having placed his guest in the seat of honor he paid no further attention to him unless his running fire of big secrets, discussed before the engineer unreservedly with Bucks, might be taken as implying that he looked on the constructionist of the Mountain Division as one of his inner official family.

Glover understood the abstraction of big men, and this forgetfulness was no discouragement. There was an abstraction on his left where Gertrude sat that was less comfortable.

At no moment during the time he had spent with the company had he been able to penetrate her reserve enough to make more than an attempt at an apology for his appalling blunder in the office. With the others he never found himself at a loss for a word or an opportunity; with Gertrude he was apparently helpless.

The talk at the lower end of the table ran for a while to comment on the washout, to Glover's wrist, and during lulls Mrs. Whitney across the table asked questions calculated to draw a family

history from her uneasy guest. Even Glover's waiter gave him so much attention that he got little to eat, but the engineer concealed no effort to see that Gertrude Brock was served and to break down by unobtrusive courtesies her determined restraint.

When the evening was over he found himself at the pass to which every evening in her company brought him—the unpleasant consciousness of a failure of his endeavors and a return of the rage he felt at himself for having blundered into her bad graces. Her father wanted him to return with them in the morning to Sleepy Cat to go over the tunnel plans again. That done, Glover resolved at all costs to escape from the punishment which every moment near her brought.

When they started for Sleepy Cat, the afternoon sun was bright, and much of the time was spent on the pretty observation platform of the Brock car. During the shifting of the groups Mr. Brock stepped forward into the directors' car for some papers, and Gertrude found herself alone for a moment on the platform with Glover. She was watching the track. He was studying a blueprint, and this time he made no effort to break the silence. Determined that the interval should not become a conscious one she spoke. "Papa seems unwilling to give you much rest to-day."

"I think I am learning more from him, though, than he is learning from me," returned Glover, without looking up. "He is a man of big ideas; I should be glad of a chance to know him."

"You are likely to have that during the next two weeks."

"I fear not."

"Did you not understand that Judge Saltzer and he are both to be with our party now?"

"But I am to leave it to-night."

She made no comment. "You do not understand why I joined it," he continued, "after my——"

"I understand, at least, how distasteful the association must have been."

He had looked up, and without flinching, he took the blow into his slow, heavy eyes, but in a manner as mild as Glover's, defiance could hardly be said to have place at any time.

"I have given you too good ground to visit your impatience on me," he said, "and I confess I've stood the ordeal badly. Your contempt has cut me to the quick. But don't, I beg, add to my humiliation by such a reproach. I'm blundering, but not wholly reprobate."

Her father appeared at the door. Glover's eyes were fastened on the blueprint.

Gertrude let her magazine lie in her lap. She

could not at all understand the plans the two men were discussing, but her father spoke so confidently about taking up Glover's suggestions in detail during the two weeks that they should have together, and Glover said so little, that she intervened presently with a little remark. "Papa; are you not forgetting that Mr. Glover says he cannot be with us on the Park trip."

"I am not forgetting it because Mr. Glover hasn't said so."

"I so understood Mr. Glover."

"Certainly not," objected Mr. Brock, looking at his companion.

"It is a disappointment to me," said Glover, "that I can't be with you."

"Why, Mr. Bucks and I have arranged it, today. There are no other duties," observed Mr. Brock, tersely.

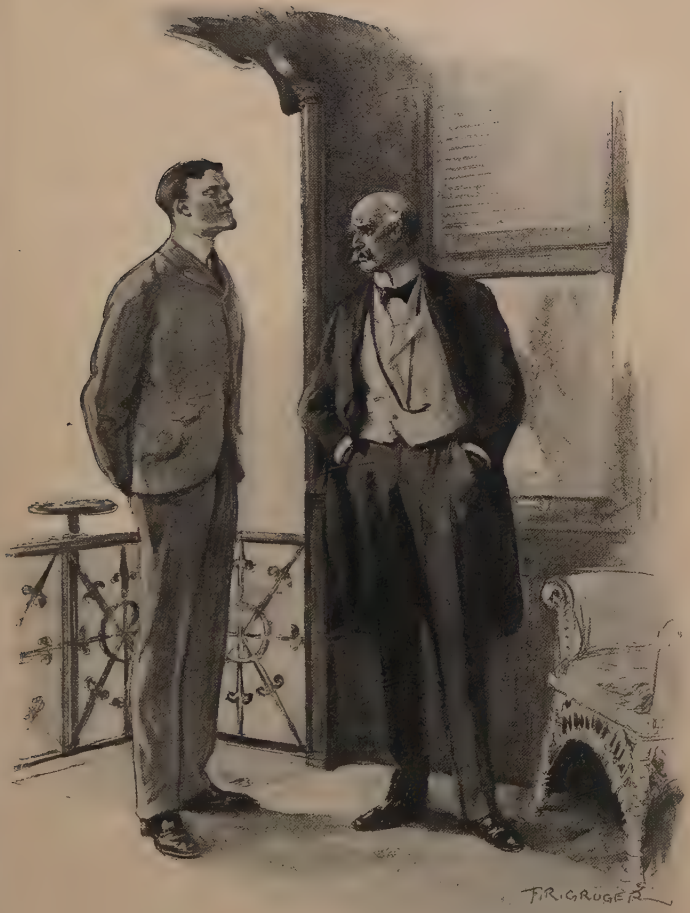
"True, but the fact is I am not well."

"Nonsense; tired out, that's all. We will rest you up; the trip will refresh you. I want you with me very particularly, Mr. Glover."

"Which makes me the sorrier I cannot be."

"Here, Mr. Bucks," called Mr. Brock, abruptly, through the open door. "What's the matter with your arrangements? Mr. Glover says he can't go through the Park."

The patient manager left Judge Saltzer, with



"I hate to see a man ruin his own chances in this way," he was saying.

whom he was talking, and came out on the platform. Gertrude went into the car. When the train reached Sleepy Cat, at dusk, she was sitting alone in her favorite corner near the rear door. The train stopped at a junction semaphore and she heard Bucks' voice on the observation platform.

"I hate to see a man ruin his own chances in this way, that's all," he was saying. "I've set the pins for you to take the rebuilding of the whole main line, but you succeed admirably in undoing my plans. By declining this opportunity you relegate yourself to obscurity just as you've made a hit in the cañon that is a fortune in itself."

"Whatever the effect," she heard someone reply with an effort at lightness, "deal gently with me, old man. The trouble is of my own making. I seem unable to face the results."

The train started and the voices were lost. Bucks stepped into the car and, without seeing Gertrude in the shadow, walked forward. She felt that Glover was alone on the platform and sat for several moments irresolute. After a while she rose, crossed to the table and fingered the roses in the jar. She saw him sitting alone in the dusk and stepped to the door; the train had slowed for the yard. "Mr. Glover?—do not get up—may I

be frank for a moment? I fear I am causing unnecessary complications—" Glover had risen.

"You, Miss Brock?"

"Did you really mean what you said to me this afternoon?"

"Very sincerely."

"Then I may say with equal sincerity that I should feel sorry to spoil papa's plans and Mr. Bucks' and your own."

"It is not you, at all, but I who have——"

"I was going to suggest that something in the nature of a compromise might be managed——"

"I have lost confidence in my ability to manage anything, but if you would manage I should be very——"

"It might be for two weeks—" She was half laughing at her own suggestion and at his seriousness.

"I should try to deserve an extension."

"—To begin to-morrow morning——"

"Gladly, for that would last longer than if it began to-night. Indeed, Miss Brock, I——"

"But—please—I do not undertake to receive explanations." He could only bow. "The status," she continued, gravely, "should remain, I think, the same."

CHAPTER X

AND A SHOCK

THE directors' party had been inspecting the Camp Pilot mines. The train was riding the crest of the pass when the sun set, and in the east long stretches of snow-sheds were vanishing in the shadows of the valley.

Glover, engaged with Mr. Brock, Judge Saltzer, and Bucks, had been forward all day, among the directors. The compartments of the Brock car were closed when he walked back through the train and the rear platform was deserted. He seated himself in his favorite corner of the umbrella porch, where he could cross his legs, lean far back, and with an engineer's eye study the swiftly receding grace of the curves and elevations of the track. They were covering a stretch of his own construction, a pet, built when he still felt young; when he had come from the East fiery with the spirit of twenty-five.

But since then he had seen seven years of blizzards, blockades, and washouts; of hard work, hardships, and disappointments. This maiden track that they were speeding over he was not

ashamed of; the work was good engineering yet. But now with new and great responsibilities on his horizon, possibilities that once would have fired his imagination, he felt that seven years in and out of the mountains had left him battle-scarred and moody.

"My sister was saying last night as she saw you sitting where you are now—that we should always associate this corner with you. Don't get up." Gertrude Brock, dressed for dinner, stood in the doorway. "You never tire of watching the track," she said, sinking into the chair he offered as he rose. Her frank manner was unlooked for, but he knew they were soon to part and felt that something of that was behind her concession. He answered in his mood.

"The track, the mountains," he replied; "I have little else."

"Would not many consider the mountains enough?"

"No doubt."

"I should think them a continual inspiration."

"So they are; though sometimes they inspire too much."

"It is so still and beautiful through here." She leaned back in her chair, supported her elbows on its arms and clasped her hands; the stealing charm of her cordiality had already roused him.

"This bit of track we are covering," said he after a pause, "is the first I built on this division; and just now I have been recalling my very first sight of the mountains." She leaned slightly forward, and again he was coaxed on. "Every tradition of my childhood was associated with this country—the plains and rivers and mountains. It wasn't alone the reading—though I read without end—but the stories of the old French traders I used to hear in the shops, and sometimes of trappers I used to find along the river front of the old town; I fed on their yarns. And it was always the wild horse and the buffalo and the Sioux and the mountains—I dreamed of nothing else. Now, so many times, I meet strangers that come into the mountains—foreigners often—and I can never listen to their rhapsodies, or even read their books about the Rockies, without a jealousy that they are talking without leave of something that's mine. What can the Rockies mean to them? Surely, if an American boy has a heritage it is the Rockies. What can they feel of what I felt the first time I stood at sunset on the plains and my very dreams loomed into the western sky? I toppled on my pins just at seeing them."

She laughed softly. "You are fond of the mountains."

"I have little else," he repeated.

"Then they ought to be loyal to you. But the first impression—it hardly remains, I suppose?"

"I am not sure. They don't grow any smaller; sometimes I think they grow bigger."

"Then you *are* fond of them. That's constancy, and constancy is a capital test of a charm."

"But I'm never sure whether they are, as you say, loyal to me. We had once on this division a remarkable man named Hailey—a bridge engineer, and a very great one. He and I stood one night on a caisson at the Spider Water—the first caisson he put into the river—do you remember that big river you crossed on the plains——"

"Indeed! I am not likely to forget a night I spent at the Spider Water; continue."

"Hailey put in the bridge there. 'This old stream ought to be thankful to you, Hailey, for a piece of work like this,' I said to him. 'No,' he answered, quite in earnest; 'the Spider doesn't like me. It will get me some time.' So I think about these mountains. I like them, and I don't like them. Sometimes I think as Hailey thought of the Spider—and the Spider did get him."

"How serious you grow!" she exclaimed, lightly.

"The truce ends to-morrow."

"And the journey ends," she remarked, encouragingly.

"What, please, does that line mean that I see so often, 'Journeys end in lovers meeting?' "

"I haven't an idea. But, oh, these mountains!" she exclaimed, stepping in caution to the guard-rail. "Could anything be more awful than this?" They were crawling antlike up a mountain spur that rose dizzily on their right; on the left they overhung a bottomless pit. Their engines churned, panted, and struggled up the curve, and as they talked the dense smoke from the stacks sucked far down into the gap they were skirting.

"The roadbed is chiselled out of the granite all along here. This is the famed Mount Pilot on the left, and this the worst spot on the division for snow. You wouldn't think of extending our truce?"

"To-morrow we leave for the coast."

"But you could leave the truce; and I want it ever so much."

She laughed. "Why should one want a truce after the occasion for it has passed?"

"Sometimes out here in the desert we get away from water. You don't know, of course, what it is to want water? I lost a trail once in the Spanish Sinks and for two days I wanted water."

"Dreadful. I have heard of such things. How did you ever find your way again?"

He hesitated. "Sometimes instinct serves after reason fails. It wasn't very good water when I reached it, but I did not know about that for two weeks. It is a curious thing, too—physiologists, I am told, have some name for the mental condition—but a man that has suffered once for water will at times suffer intensely for it again, even though you saturate him with water, drown him in it."

"How very strange; almost incredible, is it not? Have you ever experienced such a sensation?"

"I have felt it, but never acutely until to-day; that is why I want to get the truce extended. I dread the next two days."

She looked puzzled. "Mr. Glover, if you have jestingly beguiled me into real sympathy I shall be angry in earnest."

"You are going to-morrow. How could I jest about it? When you go I face the desert again. You have come like water into my life—are you going out of it forever to-morrow? May I never hope to see you again—or hear from you?" She rose in amazement; he was between her and the door. "Surely, this is extraordinary, Mr. Glover."

"Only a moment. I shall have days enough of

silence. I dread to shock or anger you. But this is one reason why I tried to keep away from you —just this—because I— And you, in unthinking innocence, kept me from my intent to escape this moment. Your displeasure was hard to bear, but your kindness has undone me. Believe me or not I did fight, a gentleman, even though I have fallen, a lover."

The displeasure of her eyes as she faced him was her only reply. Indeed, he made hardly an effort to support her look and she swept past him into the car.

The Brock train lay all next day in the Medicine Bend yard. A number of the party, with horses and guides, rode to the Medicine Springs west of the town. Glover, buried in drawings and blueprints, was in his office at the Wickiup all day with Manager Bucks and President Brock.

Late in the afternoon the attention of Gertrude, reading alone in her car, was attracted to a stout boy under an enormous hat clambering with difficulty up the railing of the observation platform. In one arm he struggled for a while with a large bundle wrapped in paper, then dropping back he threw the package up over the rail, and starting empty-handed gained the platform and picked up his parcel. He fished a letter from his pistol

pocket, stared fearlessly in at Gertrude Brock and knocked on the glass panel between them.

"Laundry parcels are to be delivered to the porter in the forward car," said Gertrude, opening the door slightly.

As she spoke the boy's hat blew off and sailed down the platform, but he maintained some dignity. "I don't carry laundry. I carry telegrams. The front door was locked. I seen you sitting in there all alone, and I've got a note and had orders to give it to you personally, and this package personally, and not to nobody else, so I climbed over."

"Stop a moment," commanded Gertrude, for the heavy messenger was starting for the railing before she quite comprehended. "Wait until I see what you have here." The boy, with his hands on the railing, was letting himself down.

"My hat's blowin' off. There ain't any answer and the charges is paid."

"Will you wait?" exclaimed Gertrude, impatiently. The very handwriting on the note annoyed her. While unfamiliar, her instinct connected it with one person from whom she was determined to receive no communication. She hesitated as she looked at her carefully written name. She wanted to return the communication unopened; but how could she be sure who had sent

it? With the impatience of uncertainty she ripped open the envelope.

The note was neither addressed nor signed.

"I have no right to keep this after you leave; perhaps I had no right to keep it at all. But in returning it to you I surely may thank you for the impulse that made you throw it over me the morning I lay asleep behind the Spider dike."

She tore the package partly open—it was her Newmarket coat. Bundling it up again she walked hastily to her compartment. For some moments she remained within; when she came out the messenger boy, his hat now low over his ears, was sitting in her chair looking at the illustrated paper she had laid down. Gertrude suppressed her astonishment; she felt somehow overawed by the unconventionalities of the West.

"Boy, what are you doing here?"

"You said, wait," answered the boy, taking off his hat and rising.

"Oh, yes. Very well; no matter."

"Ma'am?"

"No matter."

"Does that mean for me to wait?"

"It means you may go."

He started reluctantly. "Gee," he exclaimed, under his breath, looking around, "this is swell in here, ain't it?"

"See here, what is your name?"

"Solomon Battershawl, but most folks call me Gloomy."

"Gloomy! Where did you get that name?"

"Mr. Glover."

"Who sent you with this note?"

"I can't tell. He gave me a dollar and told me I wasn't to answer any questions."

"Oh, did he? What else did he tell you?"

"He said for me to take my hat off when I spoke to you, but my hat blowed off when you spoke to me."

"Unfortunate! Well, you are a handsome fellow, Gloomy. What do you do?"

"I'm a railroad man."

"Are you? How fine. So you won't tell who sent you."

"No, ma'am."

"What else did the gentleman say?"

"He said if anybody offered me anything I wasn't to take anything."

"Did he, indeed, Gloomy?"

"Yes'm."

She turned to the table from where she was sitting and took up a big box. "No money, he meant."

"Yes'm."

"How about candy?"

Solomon shifted.

"He didn't mention candy?"

"No'm."

"Do you ever eat candy?"

"Yes'm."

"This is a box that came from Pittsburg only this morning for me. Take some chocolates. Don't be afraid; take several. What is your last name?"

"Battershawl."

"Gloomy Battershawl; how pretty. Battershawl is so euphonious."

"Yes'm."

"Who is your best friend among the railroad men?"

"Mr. Duffy, our chief despatcher. I owe my promotion to 'im," said Solomon, solemnly.

"But who gives you the most money, I mean. Take a large piece this time."

"Oh, there ain't anybody gives me any money, much, exceptin' Mr. Glover. I run errands for him."

"What is the most money he ever gave you for an errand, Gloomy?"

"Dollar, twice."

"So much as that?"

"Yes'm."

"What was that for?"

"The first time it was for taking his washing down to the Spider to him on Number Two one Sunday morning."

This being a line of answer Gertrude had not expected to develop she started, but Solomon was under way. "Gee, the river w's high that time. He was down there two weeks and never went to bed at all, and came up special in a sleeper, sick, and I took care of him. Gee, he was sick."

"What was the matter?"

"Noomonia, the doctor said."

"And you took care of him!"

"Me an' the doctor."

"What was the other errand he gave you a dollar for?"

"Dassent tell."

"How did you know it was I you should give your note to?"

"He told me it was for the brown-haired young lady that walked so straight—I knew you all right —I seen you on horseback. I guess I'll have to be going 'cause I got a lot of telegrams to deliver up town."

"No hurry about them, is there?"

"No, but's getting near dinner time. Good-by."

"Wait. Take this box of candy with you."

Solomon staggered. "The whole box?"

"Certainly."

"Gee!"

He slid over the rail with the candy under his arm.

When he disappeared, Gertrude went back to her stateroom, closed the door, though quite alone in the car, and re-read her note.

"I have no right to keep this after you leave; perhaps I had no right to keep it at all. But in returning it to you I surely may thank you for the impulse that made you throw it over me the morning I lay asleep behind the Spider dike."

It was he, then, lying in the rain, ill then, perhaps—nursed by the nondescript cub that had just left her.

The Newmarket lay across the berth—a long, graceful garment. She had always liked the coat, and her eye fell now upon it critically, wondering what he thought of the garment upon making so unexpected an acquaintance with her intimate belongings. Near the bottom of the lining she saw a mud stain on the silk and the pretty fawn melton was spotted with rain. She folded it up before the horseback party returned and put it away, stained and spotted, at the bottom of her trunk.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE LALLA ROOKH

THE car in itself was in no way remarkable. A twelve-section and drawing-room, mahogany-finish, wide-vestibule sleeper, done in cream brown, hangings shading into Indian reds—a type of the Pullman car so popular some years ago for transcontinental travel; neither too heavy for the mountains nor too light for the pace across the plains.

There were many features added to the passenger schedule on the West End the year Henry S. Brock and his friends took hold of the road, but none made more stir than the new Number One, run then as a crack passenger train, a strictly limited, vestibuled string, with barbers, baths, grill rooms, and five-o'clock tea. In and out Number One was the finest train that crossed the Rockies, and bar nobody's.

It was October, with the Colorado travel almost entirely eastbound and the California travel beginning, westbound, and the Lalla Rookh sleeper be-

ing deadheaded to the coast on a special charter for an O. and O. steamer party; at least, that was all the porter knew about its destination, and he knew more than anyone else.

At McCloud, where the St. Louis connection is made, Number One sets out a diner and picks up a Portland sleeper—so it happened that the Lalla Rookh, hind car to McCloud, afterward lay ahead of the St. Louis car, and the trainmen passed, as occasion required, through it—lighted down the gloomy aisle by a single Pintsch burner, choked to an all-night dimness.

But on the night of October 3d, which was a sloppy night in the mountains, there was not a great deal to take anybody back through the Lalla Rookh. Even the porter of the dead car deserted his official corpse, and after Number One pulled out of Medicine Bend and stuck her slim, aristocratic nose fairly into the big ranges the Lalla Rookh was left as dead as a stringer to herself and her reflections—reflections of brilliant aisles and staterooms inviting with softened lights, shed on couples that resented intrusion; of sections bright with lovely faces and decks ringing with talk and laughter; of ventilators singing of sunshine within, and of night and stars and waste without—for the Lalla Rookh carried only the best people, and after the overland voyage on her

tempered springs and her yielding cushions they felt an affection for her. When the Lalla Rookh lived she lived; but to-night she was dead.

This night the pretty car sped over the range a Cinderella deserted, her linen stored and checked in her closets, her pillows bunked in her seats, and her curtains folded in her uppers, save and except in one single instance—Section Eleven, to conform to certain deeply held ideas of the porter, Raz Brown, as to what might and might not constitute a hoodoo, was made up. Raz Brown did not play much: he could not and hold his job; but when he did play he played eleven always whether it fell between seven, twenty-seven, or four, forty-four. And whenever Raz Brown deadheaded a car through, he always made up section eleven, and laid the hoodoo struggling but helpless under the chilly linen sheets of the lower berth.

Glover had spent the day without incident or excitement on the Wind River branches, and the evening had gone, while waiting to take a train west to Medicine Bend, in figuring estimates at the agent's desk in Wind River station. He was working night and day to finish the report that the new board was waiting for on the rebuilding of the system.

At midnight when he boarded the train he made

his way back to look for a place to stretch out until two o'clock.

The Pullman conductor lay in the smoking-room of the head 'Frisco car dreaming of his salary—too light to make any impression on him except when asleep. It seemed a pity to disturb an honest man's dreams, and the engineer passed on. In the smoking-room of the next car lay a porter asleep. Glover dropped his bag into a chair and took off his coat. While he was washing his hands the train-conductor, Billy O'Brien, came in and set down his lantern. Conductor O'Brien was very much awake and inclined rather to talk over a Mexican mining proposition on which he wanted expert judgment than to let Glover get to bed. When the sleepy man looked at his watch for the fifth time, the conductor was getting his wind for the dog-watch and promised to talk till daylight.

"My boy, I've got to go to bed," declared Glover.

"Every sleeper is loaded to the decks," returned O'Brien. "This is the most comfortable place you'll find."

"No, I'll go forward into the chair-car," replied Glover. "Good-night."

"Stop, Mr. Glover; if you're bound to go, the Lalla Rookh car right behind this is dead, but

there's steam on. Go into the stateroom and throw yourself on the couch. This is the porter here asleep."

"William, your advice is good. I've taken it too long to disregard it now," said Glover, picking up his bag. "Good-night."

But it was not a good night; it was a bad night, and getting worse as Number One dipped into it. Out of the northwest it smoked a ragged, wet fog down the pass, and, as they climbed higher, a bitter song from the Teton way heeled the sleepers over the hanging curves and streamed like sobs through the meshed ventilators of the Lalla Rookh. It was a nasty night for any sort of a sleeper; for a dead one it was very bad.

Glover walked into the Lalla Rookh vestibule, around the smoking-room passage, and into the main aisle of the car, dimly lighted at the hind end. He made his way to the stateroom. The open door gave him light, and he took off his storm-coat, pulled it over him for a blanket, and had closed his eyes when he reflected he had forgotten to warn O'Brien he must get off at Medicine Bend.

It was unpleasant, but forward he went again to avoid the annoyance of being carried by. He could tell as he came back, by the swing, that they were heading the Peace River curves, for the trucks were hitting the elevations like punching-bags.

Just as he regained the main aisle of the Lalla Rookh, a lurch of the car plumped him against a section-head. He grasped it an instant to steady himself, and as he stopped he looked. Whether it was that his eyes fell on the curtained section swaying under the Pintsch light ahead—Section Eleven made up—or whether his eyes were drawn to it, who can tell? A woman's head was visible between the curtains. Glover stood perfectly still and stared. Without right or reason, there certainly stood a woman.

With nobody whatever having any business in the car, a car out of service, carried as one carries a locked and empty satchel—yet the curtains of Section Eleven, next his stateroom, were parted slightly, and the half-light from above streamed on a woman's loose hair. She was not looking toward where he stood; her face was turned from him, and as she clasped the curtain she was looking into his stateroom. What the deuce! thought Glover. A woman passenger in a dead sleeper? He balanced himself to the dizzy wheel of the truck under him, and waited for her to look his way—since she must be looking for the porter—but the head did not move. The curtains swayed with the jerking of the car, but the woman in Eleven looked intently into the dark stateroom. What did it mean? Glover determined a shock.

"Tickets!" he exclaimed, sternly—and stood alone in the car.

"Tickets!" The head was gone; not alone that, strangely gone. How? Glover could not have told. It was *gone*. The Pintsch burned dim; the Teton song crooned through the ventilators; the wheels of the Lalla Rookh struck muffled at the fish-plates; the curtains of Section Eleven swung slowly in and out of the berth—but the head was not there.

A creepy feeling touched his back; his first impulse was to ignore the incident, go into the stateroom and lie down. Then he thought he might have alarmed the passenger in Eleven when he had first entered. Yet there was, officially at least, no passenger in Eleven; plainly there was nothing to do but to call the conductor. He went forward. O'Brien was sorting his collections in the smoking-room of the next car. Raz Brown, awake—nominally, at least—sat by, reading his dream-book.

"Is this the Lalla Rookh porter?" asked Glover. O'Brien nodded.

"Who's your passenger in Eleven back there?" demanded Glover, turning to the darky.

"Me?" stammered Raz Brown.

"Who's your fare in Eleven in Lalla Rookh?"

"My fare? Why, I ain't got nair 'a fare in Lalla Rookh. She's dead, boss."

"You've got a woman passenger in Eleven. What are you talking about? What's the matter with you?"

Raz Brown's eyes rolled marvellously. "'Fore God, dere ain't nobody dere ez I knows on, Mr. O'Brien," protested the surprised porter, getting up.

"There's a woman in Eleven, Billy," said Glover.

"Come on," exclaimed O'Brien, turning to the porter. "She may be a spotter. Let's see."

Raz Brown walked back reluctantly, Conductor O'Brien leading. Into the Lalla Rookh, dark and quiet, around the smoking-room, down the aisle, and facing Eleven; there the Pintsch light dimly burned, the draperies slowly swayed in front of the darkened berth. Raz Brown gripped the curtains preliminarily.

"Tickets, ma'am." There was a heavy pause.

"Tickets!" No response.

"C'nduct'h wants youh tickets, ma'am."

The silence could be cut with an axe. Raz Brown parted the curtains, peered in, opened them wider, peered farther in; pushed the curtains back with both hands. The berth was empty.

Raz looked at Conductor O'Brien. O'Brien grasped the curtains himself. The upper berth hung closed above. The lower, made up, lay un-

touched—the pillows fresh, the linen sheets folded back, Pullmanwise, over the dark blanket.

The porter looked at Glover. "See foh y'se'f."

Glover was impatient. "She's somewhere about the car," he exclaimed, "search it." Raz Brown went through the Lalla Rookh from vestibule to vestibule: it was as empty as a ceiling.

Puzzled and annoyed, Glover stood trying to recall the mysterious appearance. He walked back to where he had seen the woman, stood where he had stood and looked where he had looked. She had not seemed to withdraw, as he recalled: the curtains had not closed before the head; it had vanished. The wind sung fine, very fine through the copper screens, the Pintsch light flowed very low into the bright globe, the curtains swung again gracefully to the dip of the car; but the head was gone.

A discussion threw no light on the mystery. On one point, however, Conductor O'Brien was firm. While the conductor and the porter kept up the talk, Glover resumed his preparations for retiring in the stateroom, but O'Brien interfered.

"Don't do it. Don't you do it. I wouldn't sleep in that room now for a thousand dollars."

"Nonsense."

"That's all right. I say come forward."

They made him up a corner in the smoking-

room of the 'Frisco car, and he could have slept like a baby had not the conviction suddenly come upon him that he had seen Gertrude Brock. Should he, after all, see her again? And what did it mean? Why was she looking in terror into his stateroom?

CHAPTER XII

A SLIP ON A SPECIAL

GLOVER'S train pulled into Medicine Bend, in the rain, at half-past two o'clock. The face in the Lalla Rookh had put an end to thoughts of sleep, and he walked up to his office in the Wickiup to work until morning on his report. He lighted a lamp, opened his desk with a clang that echoed to the last dark corner of the zigzag hall, and, spreading out his papers, resumed the figuring he had begun at Wind River station. But the combinations which at eleven o'clock had gone fast refused now to work. The Lalla Rookh curtains intruded continually into his problems and his calculations dissolved helplessly into an idle stare at a jumble of figures.

He got up at last, restless, walked through the trainmaster's room, into the despatcher's office, and stumbled on the tragedy of the night.

It came about through an ambition in itself honorable—the ambition of Bud Cawkins to become a train-despatcher.

A Slip on a Special

Bud began railroading on the Wind River. In three months he was made an agent, in six months he had become an expert in station work, an operator after a despatcher's own heart, and the life of the line; then he began looking for trouble. His quest resulted first in the conviction that the main line business was not handled nearly as well as it ought to be. Had Bud confided this to an agent of experience there would have been no difficulty. He would have been told that every agent on every branch in the world, sooner or later, has the same conviction; that he need only to let it alone, eat sparingly of brain food, and the clot would be sure to pass unnoticed.

Unfortunately, Bud concealed his conviction, and asked Morris Blood to give him a chance at the Wickiup. The first time, Morris Blood only growled; the second time he looked at the handsome boy disapprovingly.

"Want to be a despatcher, do you? What's the matter with you? Been reading railroad stories? I'll fire any man on my division that reads railroad stories. Don't be a chump. You're in line now for the best station on the division."

But compliments only fanned Bud's flame, and Morris Blood, after reasonable effort to save the boy's life, turned him over to Martin Duffy.

Now, of all severe men on the West End, Duffy

is most biting. His smile is sickly, his hair dry, and his laugh soft.

"Despatcher, eh? Ha, ha, ha; I see, Bud. Coming down to show us how to do business. Oh, no. I understand; that is all right. It is what brought me here, Bud, when I was about your age and good for something. Well, it is a snap. There is nothing in the railroad life equal to a despatcher's trick. If you should make a mistake and get two trains together they will only fire you. If you happen to kill a few people they *can't* make anything more than manslaughter out of it—I know that because I've seen them try to hang a despatcher for a passenger wreck—they can't do it, Bud, don't ever believe it. In this state ten years is the extreme limit for manslaughter, and the only complication is that if your train should happen to burn up they might soak you an extra ten years for arson; but a despatcher is usually handy around a penitentiary and can get light work in the office, so that he's thrown more with wife poisoners and embezzlers than with cutthroats and hold-up men. Then, too, you can earn nearly as much in State's prison as you can at your trick. A despatcher's salary is high, you know—seventy-five, eighty, and even a hundred dollars a month.

"Of course, there's an unpleasant side of it. I

don't want to seem to draw it too rosy. I imagine you've heard Blackburn's story, haven't you—the lap-order at Rosebud? I helped carry Blackburn out of that room"—Duffy pointed very coldly toward Morris Blood's door—"the morning we put him in his coffin. But, hang it, Bud, a death like that is better than going to the insane asylum, isn't it, eh? A short trick and a merry one, my boy, for a despatcher, say I; no insane asylum for me."

It calmed Budwiser, as the boys began to call him, for a time only. He renewed his application and was at length relieved of his comfortable station and ordered into the Wickiup as despatcher's assistant.

For a time every dream was realized—the work was put on him by degrees, things ran smoothly, and his despatcher, Garry O'Neill, soon reported him all right. A month later Bud was notified that a despatcher's trick would shortly be assigned to him, and to the boys from the branch who asked after him he sent word that in a few days he would be showing them how to do business on the main line.

The chance came even sooner. O'Neill went hunting the following day, overslept, came down without supper and could not get a quiet minute till long after midnight. Heavy stock trains crowded down over the short line. The main line,

in addition to the regular traffic, had been pounded all night with government stores and ammunition, westbound. From the coast a passenger special, looked for in the afternoon, had just come into the division at Bear Dance. Garry laid out his sheet with the precision of a campaigner, provided for everything, and at three o'clock he gave Bud a transfer and ran down to get a cup of coffee. Bud sat into the chair for the first time with the responsibility of a full-fledged despatcher.

For five minutes no business confronted him, then from the extreme end of his territory Cambridge station called for orders for an extra, fast freight, west, Engine 81, and Bud wrote his first train order. He ordered Extra 81 to meet Number 50, a local and accommodation, at Sumter, and signed Morris Blood's initials with a flourish. When the trains had gone he looked over his sheet calmly until he noticed, with fainting horror, that he had forgotten Special 833, east, making a very fast run and headed for Cambridge, with no orders about Extra 81. Special 833 was the passenger train from the coast.

The sheet swam and the yellow lamp at his elbow turned green and black. The door of the operator's room opened with a bang. Bud, trembling, hoped it might be O'Neill, and staggered to the archway. It was only Glover, but

Glover saw the boy's face. "What's the matter?"

Bud looked back into the room he was leaving. Glover stepped through the railing gate and caught the boy by the shoulder. "What's the matter, my lad?"

He shook and questioned, but from the dazed operator he could get only one word, "O'Neill," and stepping to the hall door Glover called out "O'Neill!"

It has been said that Glover's voice would carry in a mountain storm from side to side of the Medicine Bend yard. That night the very last rafter in the Wickiup gables rang with his cry. He called only once, for O'Neill came bounding up the long stairs three steps at a time.

"Look to your train sheet, Garry," said Glover, peremptorily. "This boy is scared to death. There's trouble somewhere."

He supported the operator to a chair, and O'Neill ran to the inner room. The moment his eye covered the order book he saw what had happened. "Extra 81 is against a passenger special," exclaimed O'Neill, huskily, seizing the key. "There's the order—Extra 81 from Cambridge to meet Number 50 at Sumter and Special 833 has orders to Cambridge, and nothing against Extra

81. If I can't catch the freight at Red Desert we're in for it—wake up Morris Blood, quick, he's in there asleep."

Blood, working late in his office, had rolled himself in a blanket on the lounge in Callahan's old room, and unfortunately Morris Blood was the soundest sleeper on the division. Glover called him, shook him, caught him by the arm, lifted him to a sitting position, talked hurriedly to him—he knew what resource and power lay under the thick curling hair if he could only rouse the tired man from his dreamless sleep. Even Blood's own efforts to rouse himself were almost at once apparent. His eyes opened, glared helplessly, sank back and closed in stupor. Glover grew desperate, and lifting Morris to his feet, dragged him half way across the dark room.

O'Neill, rattling the key, was looking on from the table like a drowning man. "Leave your key and steady him here against the door-jamb, Garry," cried Glover; "by the Eternal, I'll wake him." He sprang to the big water-cooler, cast away the top, seized the tank like a bucket, and dashed a full stream of ice-water into Morris Blood's face.

"Great God, what's the matter? Who is this? Glover? What? Give me a towel, somebody."

The spell was broken. Glover explained, O'Neill ran back to the key, and Blood in another moment bent dripping over the nervous despatcher.

The superintendent's mind working faster now than the magic current before him, listened, cast up, recollected, considered, decided for and against every chance. At that moment Red Desert answered. No breath interrupted the faint clicks that reported on Extra 81. O'Neill looked up in agony as the sounder spelled the words: "Extra 81 went by at 3.05." The superintendent and the despatcher looked at the clock; it read 3.09.

O'Neill clutched the order book, but Glover looked at Morris Blood. With the water trickling from his hair down his wrinkled face, beading his mustache, and dripping from his chin he stood, haggard with sleep, leaning over O'Neill's shoulder. A towel stuffed into his left hand was clasped forgotten at his waist. From the east room, operators, their instruments silenced, were tiptoeing into the archway. Above the little group at the table the clock ticked. O'Neill, in a frenzy, half rose out of his chair, but Morris Blood, putting his hand on the despatcher's shoulder, forced him back.

"They're gone," cried the frantic man; "let me out of here."

"No, Garry."

"They're gone."

"Not yet, Garry. Try Fort Rucker for the Special."

"There's no night man at Fort Rucker."

"But Burling, the day man, sleeps upstairs——"

"He goes up to Bear Dance to lodge."

"This isn't lodge night," said Blood.

"For God's sake, how can you get him upstairs, anyway?" trembled O'Neill.

"On cold nights he sleeps downstairs by the ticket-office stove. I spent a night with him once and slept on his cot. If he is in the ticket-office you may be able to wake him—he may be awake. The Special can't pass there for ten minutes yet. Don't stare at me. Call Rucker, hard."

O'Neill seized the key and tried to sound the Rucker call. Again and again he attempted it and sent wild. The man that could hold a hundred trains in his head without a slip for eight hours at a stretch sat distracted.

"Let me help you, Garry," suggested Blood, in an undertone. The despatcher turned shaking from his chair and his superintendent slipped behind him into it. His crippled right hand glided instantly over the key, and the Rucker call, even, sharp, and compelling, followed by the quick, clear nineteen—the call that gags and binds the

whole division—the despatchers' call—clicked from his fingers.

Persistently, and with unfailing patience, the men hovering at his back, Blood drummed at the key for the slender chance that remained of stopping the passenger train. The trial became one of endurance. Like an incantation, the call rang through the silence of the room until it wracked the listeners, but the man at the key, quietly wiping his face and head, and with the towel in his left hand mopping out his collar, never faltered, never broke, minute after minute, until after a score of fruitless waits an answer broke his sending with the "I, I, Ru!"

As the reply flew from his fingers Morris Blood's eyes darted to the clock; it was 3.17. "Stop Special 833, east, quick."

"You've got them?" asked Glover, from the counter.

"If they're not by," muttered Blood.

"Red light out," reported Rucker; then three dreadful minutes and it came, "Special 833 taking water; O'Brien wants orders."

And the order went, "Siding, quick, and meet Extra 81, west, at Rucker," and the superintendent rose from the chair.

"It's all over, boys," said he, turning to the operators. "Remember, no man ever got to a

railroad presidency by talking; but many men have by keeping their mouths shut. Lay Cawkins on the lounge in my room. Duffy said that boy would never do."

"What was Burling doing, Morris," asked Glover, sitting down by the stove.

"Ask him, Garry," suggested Blood. They waited for the answer.

"Were you asleep on your cot?" asked the despatcher, getting Rucker again.

"If that fellow woke on my call, I'll make a despatcher of him," declared Morris Blood, with a thrill of fine pride.

"No," answered Rucker, "I slept upstairs tonight."

The two men at the stove stared at one another. "How did you hear your call?" asked the despatcher. Again their ears were on edge.

And Rucker answered, "I always come down once in the night to put coal on the fire."

"Another illusion destroyed," smiled Morris Blood. "Hang him, I'll promote him, anyway, for attending to his fire."

"But you couldn't do that again in a thousand years, Mr. Blood," ventured a young and enthusiastic operator who had helped to lay out poor Bud Cawkins.

The mountain man looked at him coldly. "I

sha'n't want to do that again in a thousand years. In the railroad life it always comes different, every time. Go to your key."

"I'm glad we got that particular train out of trouble," he added, turning to Glover when they were alone.

"What train?"

"That Special 833 is the Brock special. You didn't know it? We've been looking for them from the coast for two days."

CHAPTER XIII

BACK TO THE MOUNTAINS

THE sudden appearance of Mr. Brock at any time and at any point where he had interests would surprise only those that did not know him. On the coast the party had broken up, Louise Donner going into Colorado with friends, and Harrison returning to Pittsburg.

Planning originally to recross the mountains by a southern route, and to give himself as much of a pleasure trip as he ever took, Mr. Brock changed all his plans at the last moment—a move at which he was masterly—and wired Bucks to meet him at Bear Dance for the return trip. Doctor Lanning, moreover, had advised that Marie spend some further time in the mountains, where her gain in health had been decided.

Among the features the general manager particularly wished Mr. Brock to see before leaving the mountain country was the Crab Valley dam and irrigation canal, and the second day after the president's special entered the division it was sidetracked at a way station near Sleepy Cat for an

inspection of the undertaking. The trip to the canal was by stage with four horses, and the ladies had been asked to go.

The morning was so exhilarating and the ride so fast that when the head horses dipped over the easy divide flanking the line of the canal on the south, and the brake closed on the lumbering wheels, the visitors were surprised to discover almost at their feet a swarming army of men and horses scraping in the dusty bed of a long cut. There the heavy work was to be seen, and to give his party an idea of its magnitude, Bucks had ordered the stage driven directly through the cut itself. With Mr. Brock he sat up near the driver. Back of them were Doctor Lanning and Gertrude Brock; within rode Mrs. Whitney and Marie.

As the stage, getting down the high bank, lurched carefully along the scraper ways of the yellow bed, shovellers, drivers, and water-boys looked curiously at the unusual sight, and patient mules nosed meekly the alert, nervous horses that dragged the stage along the uneven way.

At the lower end of the cut a more formidable barrier interposed. A pocket of gravel on the eastern bank had slipped, engulfing a steam shovel, and a gang of men were busy about it. On a level overlooking the scene, in corduroy jackets and broad hats, stood two engineers. At times one

of them gave directions to a foreman whose gang was digging the shovel out. His companion, perceiving the approach of the stage, signalled the driver sharply, and the leaders were swung to the right of the shovellers so that the stage was brought out on a level some distance away.

Bucks first recognized the taller of the two men. "There's Glover," he exclaimed. "Hello!" he called across the canal bed. "I didn't look for you here." Glover lifted his hat and walked over to the stage.

"I came up last night to see Ed Smith about running his flume under Horse Creek bridge. They cross us, you know, in the cañon there," said he, in his slow, steady way. "Just as we got on the ponies to ride down, this slide occurred——"

"Glad you couldn't get away. We want to see Ed Smith," returned Bucks, getting down. The women were already greeting Glover, and avoiding Gertrude's eye while he included her in his salutation to all, he tried to answer several questions at once. Smith, the engineer in charge of the canal, was talking with Bucks and Mr. Brock. On top of the stage Doctor Lanning was trying to persuade Gertrude not to get down; but she insisted.

"Mr. Glover will help me, I am sure," she said, looking directly at the evading Glover, who was

absorbed in his talk with her sister. "I should advise you not to alight, Miss Brock," said he, unable to ignore her request. "You will sink into this dusty clay——"

"I don't mind that, but unless you will give me your hand," she interrupted, putting her boot on the foot rest to descend, "I shall certainly break my neck." When he promptly advanced she took both of his offered hands with a laugh at her recklessness and dropped lightly beside him. "May I go over where you stood?" she asked at once.

"I shouldn't," he ventured.

"But I can't see what they are doing." She walked capriciously ahead, and Glover reluctantly followed. "Why shouldn't you?" she questioned, waiting for him to come to her side.

"It isn't safe."

"Why did you stand there?"

He answered with entire composure. "What would be perfectly safe for me might be very dangerous for you."

She looked full at him. "How truly you speak."

Yet she did not stop, though at each step her feet sunk into the loosened soil.

"Pray, don't go farther," said Glover.

"I want to see the men digging."

"Then won't you come around here?"

"But may I not walk over to that car?"

"This way is more passable."

"Then why did you make the driver turn away from that side?"

"You have good eyes, Miss Brock."

"Pray, what is the matter with that man lying behind the car?"

Glover looked fairly at her at last. "A shoveller was hurt when the gravel slipped a few minutes ago. When the warning came he did not understand and got caught."

"Oh, let us get Doctor Lanning; something can be done for him."

"No. It is too late."

Horror checked her. "Dead?"

"Yes. I did not want you to know this. Your sister is easily shocked——"

She paused a moment. "You are very thoughtful of Marie. Have you a sister?"

"I haven't. Why do you ask?"

"Who taught you thoughtfulness?" she asked, gravely. He stood disconcerted. "I find consideration common among Western men," she went on, generalizing prettily; "our men don't have it. Does a life so rough and terrible as this give men the consideration that we expect elsewhere and do not find? Ah, that poor shoveller. Isn't it horrible to die so? Did everyone else escape?"

"They are ready to start, I think," he suggested, uneasily.

"Oh, are they?"

"You are coming to see us?" called Marie, leaning from the top, while Glover paused behind her sister, when they had reached the stage. He stood with his hat in his hand. The dazzling sun made copper of the swarthy brown of his lower face and brought out the white of his forehead where the hair crisped wet in the heat of the morning. Gertrude Brock, after she had gained her seat with his help, looked down while he talked; looked at the top of his head, and listening vaguely to Marie, noted his long, bony hand as it clung to the window strap—the hand of the most audacious man she had ever met in her life—who had made an avowal to her on the observation platform of her father's own car—and she mused at the explosion that would have followed had she ever breathed a syllable of the circumstance to her own fiery papa.

But she had told no one—least of all, the young man that had asked her before she left Pittsburg to marry him and was now writing her every other day—Allen Harrison. Indeed, what could be more ridiculously embarrassing than to be assailed so unexpectedly? She had no mind to make herself anyone's laughing-stock by speaking of it.

One thing, however, she had vaguely determined —since Glover had frightened her she would retaliate at least a little before she returned to the quiet of Fifth Avenue.

Marie was still talking to him. "Why haven't you heard? I thought sister would have told you. The doctor says I gained faster here than anywhere between the two oceans, and we are all to spend six weeks up at Glen Tarn Springs. Papa is going East and coming back after us, and we shall expect you to come to the Springs very often."

The stage was starting. Gertrude faced backward as she sat. She could see Glover's salutation, and she waved a glove. He was as utterly confused as she could desire. She saw him rejoin his companion engineer near where lay the shoveller with the covered face, and the thought of the terrible accident depressed her. As she last saw Glover he was pointing at the faulty bank, and she knew that the two men were planning again for the safety of the men.

About Glen Tarn, now quite the best known of the Northern mountain resorts, there is no month like October: no sun like the October sun, and no frost like the first that stills the aspen. Moreover, the travel is done, the parks are deserted,

the mountains robing for winter. In October, the horse, starting, shrinks under his rider, for the lion, always moving, never seen, is following the game into the valleys, leaving the grizzly to beat his stubborn retreat from the snow line alone.

Starting from the big hotel in a new direction every day the Pittsburgers explored the valleys and the cañons, for the lake and the springs nestle in the Pilot Mountains and the scenery is everywhere new. Mount Pilot itself rises loftily to the north, and from its sides may be seen every peak in the range.

One day, for a novelty, the whole party went down to Medicine Bend, nominally on a shopping expedition, but really on a lark. Medicine Bend is the only town within a day's distance of Glen Tarn Springs where there are shops; and though the shopping usually ended in a chorus of jokes, the trip on the main line trains, which they caught at Sleepy Cat, was always worth while, and the dining-car, with an elaborate supper in returning, was a change from the hotel table.

Sometimes Gertrude and Mrs. Whitney went together to the headquarters town—Gertrude expecting always to encounter Glover. When some time had passed, her failure to get a glimpse of him piqued her. One day with her aunt going down they met Conductor O'Brien. He was

more than ready to answer questions, and fortunately for the reserve that Gertrude loved to maintain, Mrs. Whitney remarked they had not seen Mr. Glover for some time.

"No one has seen much of him for two weeks; he had a little bad luck," explained Conductor O'Brien.

"Indeed?"

"Three weeks ago he was up at Crab Valley. They had a cave-in on the irrigation canal and two or three men got caught under a coal platform near the steam shovel. Glover was close by when it happened. He got his back under the timbers until they could get the men out and broke two of his ribs. He went home that night without knowing of it, but a couple of days afterward he sneezed and found it out right away. Since then he's been doing his work in a plaster cast."

Their return train that day was several hours behind time and Gertrude and her aunt were compelled to go up late to the American House for supper. A hotel supper at Medicine Bend was naturally the occasion of some merriment, and the two diverted themselves with ordering a wild assortment of dishes. The supper hour had passed, the dining-room had been closed, and they were sitting at their dessert when a late comer entered

the room. Gertrude touched her aunt's arm—Glover was passing.

Mrs. Whitney's first impulse was to halt the silent engineer with one of her imperative words. To think of him was to think only of his easily approachable manner; but to see him was indistinctly to recall something of a dignity of simplicity. She contented herself with a whisper. "He doesn't see us."

At the lower end of the room Glover sat down. Almost at once Gertrude became conscious of the silence. She handled her fork noiselessly, and the interval before a waitress pushed open the swinging kitchen door to take his order seemed long. The Eastern girl watched narrowly until the waitress flounced out, and Glover, shifting his knife and his fork and his glass of water, spread his limp napkin across his lap, and resting his elbow on the table supported his head on his hand.

The surroundings had never looked so bare as then, and a sense of the loneliness of the shabby furnishings filled her. The ghastliness of the arc-lights, the forbidding whiteness of the walls, and the penetrating odors of the kitchen seemed all brought out by the presence of a man alone.

Mrs. Whitney continued to jest, but Gertrude responded mechanically. Glover was eating his

supper when the two rose from their table, and Mrs. Whitney led the way toward him.

"So, this is the invalid," she said, halting abruptly before him. "Mrs. Whitney!" exclaimed Glover, trying hastily to rise as he caught sight of Gertrude.

"Will you please be seated?" commanded Mrs. Whitney. "I insist——"

He sat down. "We want only to remind you," she went on, "that we hate to be completely ignored by the engineering department even when *not* officially in its charge."

"But, Mrs. Whitney, I can't sit if you are to stand," he answered, greeting Gertrude and her aunt together.

"You are an invalid; be seated. Nothing but toast?" objected Mrs. Whitney, drawing out a chair and sitting down. "Do you expect to mend broken ribs on toast?"

"I'm well mended, thank you. Do I look like an invalid?"

"But we heard you were seriously hurt." He laughed. "And want to suggest Glen Tarn as a health resort."

"Unfortunately, the doctor has discharged me. In fact, a broken rib doesn't entitle a man to a lay-off. I hope your sister continues to improve?" he added, looking at Gertrude.

"She does, thank you. Mrs. Whitney and I have been talking of the day we met you at the irrigation—" he did not help her to a word—"works," she continued, feeling the slight confusion of the pause. "You"—he looked at her so calmly that it was still confusing—"you were hurt before we met you and we must have seemed unconcerned under the circumstances. We speak often at Glen Tarn of the delightful weeks we spent in your mountain wilds last summer," she added.

Glover thanked her, but appeared absorbed in Mrs. Whitney's attempt to disengage her eyeglasses from their holder, and Gertrude made no further effort to break his restraint. Mrs. Whitney talked, and Glover talked, but Gertrude reserved her bolt until just before their train started.

He had gone with them, and they were standing on the platform before the vestibule steps of their Pullman car. As the last moment approached it was not hard to see that Glover was torn between Mrs. Whitney's rapid-fire talk and a desire to hear something from Gertrude.

She waited till the train was moving before she loosed her shaft. Mrs. Whitney had ascended the steps, the porter was impatient, Glover nervous. Gertrude turned with a smile and a totally bewildering cordiality on the unfortunate man.

"My sister," her glove was on the hand-rail, "sends some sort of a message to Mr. Glover every time I come to Medicine Bend—but the gist of them all is that she would be very"—the train was moving and they were stepping along with it—"glad to see you at Glen Tarn before——"

"Gertrude," screamed Mrs. Whitney, "will you get on?"

Glover's eyes were growing like target-lights.

"—before we go East," continued Gertrude. "So should I," she added, throwing in the last three words most inexplicably, as she kept step with the engineer. But she had not miscalculated the effect.

"Are you to go soon?" he exclaimed. The porter followed them helplessly with his stool. Mrs. Whitney wrung her hands, and Gertrude attempted to reach the lower tread of the car step.

Someone very decidedly helped her, and she laughed and rose from his hands as lightly as to a stirrup. When she collected herself, after the pleasure of the spring, Mrs. Whitney was scolding her for her carelessness; but she was waving a glove from the vestibule at a big hat still lifted in the dusk of the platform.

CHAPTER XIV

GLEN TARN

OCTOBER had not yet gone when they met again in a Medicine Bend street. Glover, leaving the Wickiup with Morris Blood, ran into Gertrude Brock coming out of an Indian curio-shop with Doctor Lanning. She began at once to talk to Glover. "Marie was regretting, yesterday, that you had not yet found your way to Glen Tarn."

The sun beat intensely on her black hat and her suit of gray. In her gloved hand she twirled the tip of her open sunshade on the pavement with deliberation and he shifted his footing helplessly. His heavy face never looked homelier than in sunshine, and she gazed at him with a calmness that was staggering. He muttered something about having been unusually busy.

"We, too, have been," smiled Gertrude, "making final preparations for our departure."

"Do you go so soon?" he exclaimed.

"We are waiting only papa's return now to say good-by to the mountains." The way in which

she put it stirred him as she had intended it should —uncomfortably.

"I should certainly want to say good-by to your sister," muttered Glover. But in saying even so little his naturally unsteady voice broke one extra tone, and when this happened it angered him.

"You are not timid, are you?" continued Gertrude.

"I think I am something of a coward."

"Then you shouldn't venture," she laughed, "Marie has a scolding for you."

Morris Blood had been telling Doctor Lanning that he and Glover were to go over to Sleepy Cat on the train the doctor and Gertrude were to take back to Glen Tarn. The two railroad men were just starting across the yard to inspect an engine, the 1018, which was to pull the limited train that day for the first time. It was a new monster, planned by the modest little Manxman, Robert Crosby, for the first district run. "Help her over the pass," Crosby had whispered—the superintendent of motive power hardly ever spoke aloud—"and she'll buck a headwind like a canvas-back. Give her decent weather, and on the Sleepy Cat trail she'll run away with six, yes, eight Pullmans."

Doctor Lanning was curious to look over the new machine, the first to signalize the new owner-

ship of the line, and Gertrude was quite ready to accept Blood's invitation to go also.

With the doctor under the superintendent's wing, Gertrude, piloted by Glover, crossed the network of tracks, asking railroad questions at every step.

Reaching the engine, she wanted to get up into the cab, to say that, before leaving the mountains forever, she had been once inside an engine. Glover, after some delay, procured a stepladder from the "rip" track, and with this the daughter of the magnate made an unusual but easy ascent to the cab. More than that, she made herself a heroine to every yardman in sight, and strengthened the new administration incalculably.

She ignored a conventional offer of waste from the man in charge of the cab, who she was surprised to learn, after some sympathetic remarks on her part, was not the engineman at all. He was a man that had something to do with horses. And when she suggested it would be quite an event for so big an engine to go over the mountains for the first time, the hostler told her it had already been over a good many times.

But Mr. Blood had an easy explanation for every confusing statement, and did not falter even when Miss Brock wanted to start the 1018 herself. He objected that she would soil her gloves,

but she held them up in derision; plainly, they had already suffered. Some difficulty then arose because she could not begin to reach the throttle. Again, with much chaffing, the stepladder was brought into play, and steadied on it by Morris Blood, and coached by the hostler, the heiress to many millions grasped the throttle, unlatched it and pulled at the lever vigorously with both hands.

The packing was new, but Gertrude persisted, the bar yielded, and to her great fright things began to hiss. The engine moved like a roaring leviathan, and the author of the mischief screamed, tried to stop it, and being helpless appealed to the unshaven man to help her. Glover, however, was nearest and shut off.

It was all very exciting, and when on the turntable Gertrude was told by the doctor that her suit was completely ruined she merely held up both her blackened gloves, laughing, as Glover came up; and caught up her begrimed skirt and joined him with a flush on her cheeks as bright as a danger signal.

Some fervor of the magical day, under those skies where autumn itself is only a heavier wine than spring, something of the deep breath of the mountain scene seemed to infect her.

She walked at Glover's side. She recalled with the slightest pretty mirth his fetching the ladder

—the way in which he had crossed a flat car by planting the ladder alongside, mounting, pulling the steps after him, and descending on them to the other side.

In her humor she faintly suggested his awkward competence in doing things, and he, too, laughed. As they crossed track after track she would place the toe of her boot on a rail glittering in the sun, and rising, balance an instant to catch an answer from him before going on. There was no haste in their manner. They had crossed the railroad yard, strangers; they recrossed it quite other. Their steps they retraced, but not their path. The path that led them that day together to the engine was never to be retraced.

To worry Crosby's new locomotive, Blood's car had been ordered added to the westbound limited, but neither Glover nor Blood spent any time in the private car. The afternoon went in the Pullman with Gertrude Brock and Doctor Lanning. At dinner Glover did the ordering because he had earlier planned to celebrate the promotion, already known, of Morris Blood to the general superintendency.

If there were few lines along which the construction engineer could shine he at least appeared to advantage as the host of his friend, since

the ordering of a dinner is peculiarly a gentleman's matter, and even the modest complement of wine which the occasion demanded, Glover toasted in a way that revealed the boyish loyalty between the two men.

The spirit of it was so contagious that neither the doctor nor Gertrude made scruple of adding their congratulations. But the moments were fleeting and Glover, next day, could recall them up to one scene only. When Gertrude found she could not, even after a brave effort, ride with her back to the engine, and accepted so graciously Mr. Blood's offer to change seats, it brought her beside Glover; after that his memory failed.

In the morning he felt miserably overdone, as at Sleepy Cat a man might after running a preliminary half way to heaven. Moreover, when they parted he had, he remembered, undertaken to dine the following evening at the Springs.

When he entered the apartments of the Pittsburg party at six o'clock, Mrs. Whitney reproached him for his absence during their month at Glen Tarn, and in Mrs. Whitney's manner, peremptorily.

"I'm sure we've missed seeing everything worth while about here," she complained. Her annoyance put Glover in good humor. Marie met him with a gentler reproach. "And we go next week!"

"But you've seen everything, I know," he protested, answering both of them.

"Whether we have or not, Mr. Glover should be penalized for his indifference," suggested Marie. Doctor Lanning came in. "Compel him to show us something we haven't seen around the lake," suggested the doctor. "That he cannot do; then we have only to decide on his punishment."

"Oh, yes, I want to be on that jury," said Gertrude, entering softly in black.

"But is this Pittsburg justice?" objected Glover, rising at the spell of her eyes to the raillery. "Shouldn't I have a try at the scenery end of the proposition before sentence is demanded?"

"Justify quickly, then," threatened Marie, as they started for the dining-room; "we are not trifling."

"Of course you've been here a month," began Glover, when the party were seated.

"Yes."

"Out every day."

"Yes."

"The guides have all your money?"

"Yes."

"Then I stake everything on a single throw——"

"A professional," interjected Doctor Lanning.

"Only desperate gamesters stake all on a single throw," said Gertrude warningly.

"I am a desperate gamester," said Glover, "and now for it. Have you seen the Devil's Gap?"

A chorus of derision answered.

"The very first day—the very first trip!" cried Mrs. Whitney, raising her tone one note above every other protest.

"And you staked all on so wretched a chance?" exclaimed Gertrude. "Why, Devil's Gap is the stock feature of every guide, good, bad, and indifferent, at the Springs."

"I have staked more at heavier odds," returned Glover, taking the storm calmly, "and won. Have you made but one trip, when you first came, do you say?"

"The very first day."

"Then you haven't seen Devil's Gap. To see it," he continued, "you must see it at night."

"At night?"

"With the moon rising over the Spanish Sinks."

"Ah, how *that* sounds!" exclaimed Marie.

"To-night we have full moon," added Glover. "Don't say too lightly you have seen Devil's Gap, for that is given to but few tourists."

"Do not call us tourists," objected Gertrude.

"And from where did you see Devil's Gap—The Pilot?"

"No, from across the Tarn."

If the expression of Glover's face, returning somewhat the ridicule heaped on him, was intended to pique the interest of the sightseers it was effective. He was restored, provisionally, to favor; his suggestion that after dinner they take horses for the ride up Pilot Mountain to where the Gap could be seen by moonlight was eagerly adopted, and Mrs. Whitney's objection to dressing again was put down. Marie, fearing the hardship, demurred, but Glover woke to so lively interest, and promised the trip should be so easy that when she consented to go he made it his affair to attend directly to her comfort and safety.

He summoned one particular liveryman, not a favorite at the fashionable hotel, and to him gave especial injunctions about the horses. The girths Glover himself went over at starting, and in the riding he kept near Marie.

Lighted by the stars, they left the hotel in the early evening. "How are you to find your way, Mr. Glover?" asked Marie, as they threaded the path he led her into after they had reached the mountain. "Is this the road we came on?"

"I could climb Pilot blindfolded, I reckon. When we came in here I ran surveys all around the old fellow, switchbacks and everything. The line is a Chinese puzzle about here for ten miles.

The path you're on now is an old Indian trail out of Devil's Gap. The guides don't use it because it is too long. The Gap is a ten-dollar trip, in any case, and naturally they make it the shortest way."

For thirty minutes they rode in darkness, then leaving a sharp defile they emerged on a plateau.

Across the Sinks the moon was rising full and into a clear sky. To the right twinkled the lights of Glen Tarn, and below them yawned the unspeakable wrench in the granite shoulders of the Pilot range called Devil's Gap. Out of its appalling darkness projected miles of silvered spurs tipped like grinning teeth by the light of the moon.

"There are a good many Devil's Gaps in the Rockies," said Glover, after the silence had been broken; "but, I imagine, if the devil condescends to acknowledge any he wouldn't disclaim this."

Gertrude stood beside her sister. "You are quite right," she admitted. "We have spent our month here and missed the only overpowering spectacle. This is Dante."

"Indeed it is," he assented, eagerly. "I must tell you. The first time I got into the Gap with a locating party I had a volume of Dante in my pack. It is an unfortunate trait of mine that in reading I am compelled to chart the topography of a story as I go along. In the 'Inferno' I could never get head or tail of the topography.

One night we camped on this very ledge. In the night the horses roused me. When I opened the tent fly the moon was up, about where it is now. I stood till I nearly froze, looking—but I thought after that I could chart the 'Inferno.' If it weren't so dry, or if we were going to stay all night, I should have a camp-fire; but it wouldn't do, and before you get cold we must start back.

"See," he pointed, far down on the left. "Can you make out that speck of light? It is the headlight of a freight train crawling up the range from Sleepy Cat. When the weather is right you can see the white head of Sleepy Cat Mountain from this spot. That train will wind around in sight of this knob for an hour, climbing to the mining camps."

Doctor Lanning called to Marie. Gertrude stood with Glover.

"Is that the desert of the Spanish Sinks?" she asked, looking into the stream of the moon.

"Yes."

"Is that where you were lost two days?"

"My horse got away. Have you hurt your hand?"

She was holding her right hand in her left. "I tore my glove on a thorn, coming up. It is not much."

"Is it bleeding?"

"I don't know; can you see?"

She drew down the glove gauntlet and held her hand up. If his breath caught he did not betray it, but while he touched her she could very plainly feel his hand tremble; yet for that matter his hand, she knew, trembled frequently. He struck a match. It was no part of her audacity to betray herself, and she stepped directly between the others and the little blaze and looked into his face while he inspected her wrist. "Can you see?"

"It is scratched badly, but not bleeding," he answered.

"It hurts."

"Very likely; the wounds that hurt most don't always bleed," he said, evenly. "Let us go."

"Oh, no," she said; "not quite yet. This is unutterable. I love this."

"Your aunt, I fear, is not interested. She is complaining of the cold. I can't light a fire; the mountain is all timber below——"

"Aunt Jane would complain in heaven, but that wouldn't signify she didn't appreciate it. Why are you so quickly put out? It isn't like you to be out of humor." She drew on her glove slowly. "I wish you had this wrist——"

"I wish to God I had." The sudden words frightened her. She showed her displeasure in

half turning away, then she resolutely faced him. "I am not going to quarrel with you even if you make fun of me——"

"Fun of you?"

"Even if you put an unfair sense on what I say."

"I meant what I said in every sense, either to take the pain or—the other. I couldn't make fun of you. Do you never make fun of me, Miss Brock?"

"No, Mr. Glover, I do not. If you would be sensible we should do very well. You have been so kind, and we are to leave the mountains so soon, we ought to be good friends."

"Will you tell me one thing, Miss Brock—are you engaged?"

"I don't think you should ask, Mr. Glover. But I am not engaged—unless that in a sense I am," she added, doubtfully.

"What sense, please?"

"That I have given no answer. Are you still complaining of the cold, Aunt Jane?" she cried, in desperation, turning toward Mrs. Whitney. "I find it quite warm over here. Mr. Glover and I are still watching the freight train. Come over, do."

Going back, Glover rode near to Gertrude, who had grown restless and imperious. To hunt this

queer mountain-lion was recreation, but to have the mountain-lion hunt her was disquieting.

She complained again of her wounded hand, but refused all suggestions, and gave him no credit for riding between her and the thorny trees through the cañon. It was midnight when the party reached the hotel, and when Gertrude stepped across the parlor to the water-pitcher, Glover followed. "I must thank you for your thoughtfulness of my little sister to-night," she was saying.

He was so intent that he forgot to reply.

"May I ask one question?" he said.

"That depends."

"When you make answer may I know what it is?"

"Indeed you may not."

CHAPTER XV

NOVEMBER

THEY walked back to the parlors. Doctor Lanning and Marie were picking up the rackets at the ping-pong table. Mrs. Whitney had gone into the office for the evening mail.

Passing the piano, Gertrude sat down and swung around toward the keys. Glover took music from the table. Unwilling to admit a trace of the unusual in the beating of her heart, or in her deeper breathing, she could not entirely control either; there was something too fascinating in defying the light that she now knew glowed in the dull eyes at her side. She avoided looking; enough that the fire was there without directly exposing her own eyes to it. She drummed with one hand, then with both, at a gavotte on the rack before her.

Overcome merely at watching her fingers stretch upon the keys he leaned against the piano.

"Why did you ask me to come up?"

As he muttered the words she picked again and again with her right hand at a loving little phrase

in the gavotte. When it went precisely right she spoke in the same tone, still caressing the phrase, never looking up. "Are you sorry you came?"

"No; I'd rather be trod under foot than not be near you."

"May we not be friends without either of us being martyred? I shall be afraid ever to ask you to do anything again. Was I wrong in—assuming it would give you as well as all of us pleasure to dine together this evening?"

"No. You know better than that. I am insanely presumptuous, I know it. Let me ask one last favor——"

The gavotte rippled under her fingers. "No."

He turned away. She swung on the stool toward him and looked very kindly and frankly up. "You have been too courteous to all of us for that. Ask as many favors as you like, Mr. Glover," she murmured, "but not, if you please, a last one."

"It shall be the last, Miss Brock. I only——"

"You only what?"

"Will you let me know what day you are going, so I may say good-by?"

"Certainly I will. You will be at Medicine Bend in any case, won't you?"

"No. I have fifteen hundred miles to cover next week."

"What for—oh, it isn't any of my business, is it?"

"Looking over the snowsheds. Will you telegraph me?"

"Where?"

"At the Wickiup; it will reach me."

"You might have to come too far. We shall start in a few days."

"Will you telegraph me?"

"If you wish me to."

Eight days later, when suspense had grown sullen and Glover had parted with all hope of hearing from her, he heard. In the depths of the Heart River range her message reached him.

Every day Giddings, hundreds of miles away at the Wickiup, had had his route-list. Giddings, who would have died for the engineer, waited, every point in the repeating covered, day after day for a Glen Tarn message that Glover expected. For four days Glover had hung like a dog around the nearer stretches of the division. But the season was advanced, he dared not delegate the last vital inspection of the year, and bitterly he retreated from shed to shed until he was buried in the barren wastes of the eighth district.

The day in the Heart River mountains is the thin, gray day of the alkali and the sage. On Fri-

day afternoon Glover's car lay sidetracked at the east end of the Nine Mile shed waiting for a limited train to pass. The train was late and the sun was dropping into an ashen strip of wind clouds that hung cold as shrouds to the north and west when the gray-powdered engine whistled for the siding.

Motionless beside the switch Glover saw down the gloom of the shed the shoes wringing fire from the Pullman wheels, and wondered why they were stopping. The conductor from the open vestibule waved to him as the train slowed and ran forward with the message.

"Giddings wired me to wait for your answer, Mr. Glover," said the conductor.

Glover was reading the telegram:

"I may start Saturday.

"G. B."

There was one chance to make it; that was to take the limited train then and there. Bidding the conductor wait he hastened to his car, called for his gripsack, gave his assistant a volley of orders, and boarded a Pullman. Not the preferred stock of the whole system would have availed at that moment to induce an inspection of Nine Mile shed.

There were men that he knew in the sleepers, but he shunned acquaintance and walked on till he found an empty section into which he could throw himself and feast undisturbed on his telegram. He studied it anew, tried to consider coolly whether her message meant anything or nothing, and gloated over the magic of the letters that made her initials: and when he slept, the word last in his heart was Gertrude.

In the morning he breakfasted late in the sunshine of the diner, passed his friends again and secluded himself in his section. Never before had she said "I"; always it had been "we." With eyes half-closed upon the window he repeated the words and spoke her name after them, because every time the speaking drugged him like lotus, until, yielding again to the exhaustion of the week's work and strain, he fell asleep.

When he woke the car was dark; the train conductor, Sid Francis, was sitting beside him, laughing.

"You're sleepy to-day, Mr. Glover."

"Sid, where are we?" asked Glover, looking at his watch; it was four o'clock.

"Grouse Creek."

"Are we that late? What's the matter?"

The conductor nodded toward the window. "Look there."

The sky was gray with a driving haze; a thin sweep of snow flying in the sand of the storm was whitening the sagebrush.

Glover, waking wide, turned to the window. "Where's the wind, Sid?"

"Northwest."

"What's the thermometer?"

"Thirty at Creston; sixty when we left MacDill at noon."

"Everything running?"

"They've been getting the freights into division since noon. There'll be something doing to-night on the range. They sent stock warnings everywhere this morning, but they can't begin to protect the stock between here and Medicine in one day. Pulling hard, isn't she? We're not making up anything."

The porter was lighting the lamps. While they talked it had grown quite dark. Losing time every mile of the way, the train, frost-crusted to the eyelids, got into Sleepy Cat at half-past six o'clock; four hours late.

The crowded yard, as they pulled through it, showed the tie-up of the day's traffic. Long lines of freight cars filled the trackage, and overloaded switch engines struggled with ever-growing burdens to avert the inevitable blockade of the night. Glover's anxiety, as he left the train at the station,

was as to whether he could catch anything on the Glen Tarn branch to take him up to the Springs that night, for there he was resolved to get before morning if he had to take an engine for the run.

As he started up the narrow hall leading to the telegraph office he heard the rustle of skirts above. Someone was descending the stairway, and with his face in the light he halted.

"Oh, Mr. Glover."

"Why—Miss Brock!" It was Gertrude.

"What in the world—" he began. His broken voice was very natural, she thought, but there was amazement in his utterance. He noticed there was little color in her face; the deep boa of fur nestling about her throat might account for that.

"What a chance that I should meet you!" she exclaimed, her back hard against the side wall, for the hall was narrow and brought them face to face. She spoke on. "Did you get my——?"

"Did I?" he echoed slowly; "I have travelled every minute since yesterday afternoon to get here——"

Her uneasy laugh interrupted him. "It was hardly worth while, all that."

"—and I was just going up to find out about getting to Glen Tarn."

"Glen Tarn! I left Glen Tarn this afternoon all alone to go to Medicine Bend—papa is there,

did you know? He came yesterday with all the directors. Our car was attached for me to the afternoon train coming down." She was certainly wrought up, he thought. "But when we reached here the train I should have taken for Medicine Bend had not come——"

"It is here now."

"Thank heaven, is it?"

"I came in on it."

"Then I can start at last! I have been so nervous. Is this our train? They said our car couldn't be attached to this train, and that I should have to go down in one of the sleepers. I don't understand it at all. Will you have the car sent back to Glen Tarn in the morning, Mr. Glover? And would you get my handbag? I was nearly run over a while ago by some engine or other. I mustn't miss this train——"

"Never fear, never fear," said Glover.

"But I *cannot* miss it. Be very, very sure, won't you?"

"Indeed, I shall. The train won't start for some time yet. First let me take you to your car and then make some inquiries. Is no one down with you?"

"No one; I am alone."

"Alone?"

"I expected to have been with papa by this time.

It takes so little time to run down, you know, and I telegraphed papa I should come on to meet him. Isn't it most disagreeable weather?"

Glover laughed as he shielded her from the wind. "I suppose that's a woman's name for it."

The car, coupled to a steampipe, stood just east of the station, and Glover, helping her into it, went back after a moment to the telegraph office. It seemed a long time that he was gone, and he returned covered with snow. She advanced quickly to him in her wraps. "Are they ready?"

He shook his head. "I'm afraid you can't get to Medicine to-night."

"Oh, but I must."

"They have abandoned Number Six."

"What does that mean?"

"The train will be held here to-night on account of the storm. There will be no train of any kind down before morning; not then if this keeps up."

"Is there danger of a blockade?"

"There is a blockade."

"Then I must get to papa to-night." She spoke with disconcerting firmness.

"May I suggest?" he asked.

"Certainly."

"Would it not be infinitely better to go back to the Springs?"

"No, that would be infinitely worse."

"It would be comparatively easy—an engine to pull your car up on a special order?"

"I will *not* go back to the Springs to-night, and I will go to Medicine Bend," she exclaimed, apprehensively. "May I not have a special there as well as to the Springs?"

Until that moment he had never seen anything of her father in her; but her father spoke in every feature; she was a Brock.

Glover looked grave. "You may have, I am sure, every facility the division offers. I make only the point," he said, gently, "that it would be hazardous to attempt to get to the Bend to-night. I have just come from the telegraph office. In the district I left this morning the wires are all down to-night. That is where the storm is coming from. There is a lull here just now, but——"

"I thank you, Mr. Glover, believe me, very sincerely for your solicitude. I have no choice but to go, and if I must, the sooner the better, surely. Is it possible for you to make arrangements for me?"

"It is possible, yes," he answered, guardedly.

"But you hesitate."

"It is a terrible night."

"I like snow, Mr. Glover."

"The danger to-night is the wind."

"Are you afraid of the wind?" There was a touch of ridicule in her half-laughing tone.

"Yes," he answered, "I am afraid of the wind."

"You are jesting."

She saw that he flushed just at the eyes; but he spoke still gently.

"You feel that you must go?"

"I must."

"Then I will get orders at once."

CHAPTER XVI

NIGHT

GLOVER looked at his watch; it was Giddings' trick at Medicine Bend, and he made little doubt of getting what he asked for. He walked to the eating-house and from there directly across to the roundhouse, and started a hurry call for the night foreman. He found him at a desk talking with Paddy McGraw, the engineer that was to have taken out Number Six.

"Paddy," said Glover, "do you want to take me to Medicine to-night?"

"They've just cancelled Number Six."

"I know it."

"You don't have to go to-night, do you?"

"Yes, with Mr. Brock's car. This isn't as bad as the night you and I and Jack Moore bucked snow at Point of Rocks," said Glover, significantly. "Do you remember carrying me from the number seven culvert clean back to the station after the steampipe broke?"

"You bet I do, and I never thought you'd see again after the way your eyes were cooked that

night. Well, of course, if you want to go to-night, it's go, Mr. Glover. You know what you're about, but I'd never look to see you going out for fun a night like this."

"I can't help it. Yet I wouldn't want any man to go out with me to-night unwillingly, Paddy."

"Why, that's nothing. You got me my first run on this division. I'd pull you to hell if you said so."

Glover turned to the night foreman. "What's the best engine in the house?"

"There's the 1018 with steam and a plough."

Glover started. "The 1018?"

"She was to pull Six." The mountain man picked up the telephone, and getting the operators, sent a rush message to Giddings. Leaving final instructions with the two men he returned to the telegraph office. When Giddings' protest about ordering a train out on such a night came, Glover, who expected it, choked it back—assuming all responsibility—gave no explanations and waited. When the orders came he inspected them himself and returned to the car. Gertrude, in the car alone, was drinking coffee from a hotel tray on the card table. "It was very kind of you to send this in," she said, rising cordially. "I had forgotten all about dinner. Have you succeeded?"

"Yes. Could you eat what they sent?"

"Pray look. I have left absolutely nothing and I am very grateful. Do I not seem so?" she added, searchingly. "I want to because I am."

He smiled at her earnestness. Two little chairs were drawn up at the table, and facing each other they sat down while Gertrude finished her coffee and made Glover take a sandwich.

When the train conductor came in ten minutes later Glover talked with him. While the men spoke Gertrude noticed how Glover overran the dainty chair she had provided. She scrutinized his rough-weather garb, the heavy hunting boots, the stout reefer buttoned high, and the leather cap crushed now with his gloves in his hand. She had been asking him where he got the cap, and a moment before, while her attention wandered, he had told her the story of a company of Russian noblemen and engineers from Vladivostok, who, during the summer, had been his guests, nominally on a bear hunt, though they knew better than to hunt bears in summer. It was really to pick up points on American railroad construction. He might go, he thought, the following spring to Siberia himself, perhaps to stay—this man that feared the wind—he had had a good offer. The cap was a present.

The two men went out and she was left alone. A flagman, hat in hand, passed through the car.

The shock of the engine coupler striking the buffer hardly disturbed her reverie; for her the night meant too much.

Glover was with the operators giving final instructions to Giddings for ploughs to meet them without fail at Point of Rocks. Hastening from the office he looked again at the barometer. It promised badly and the thermometer stood at ten degrees above zero.

He had made his way through the falling snow to where they were coupling the engine to the car, watched narrowly, and going forward spoke to the engineer. When he re-entered the car it was moving slowly out of the yard.

Gertrude, with a smile, put aside her book. "I am so glad," she said, looking at her watch. "I hope we shall get there by eleven o'clock; we should, should we not, Mr. Glover?"

"It's a poor night for making a schedule," was all he said. The arcs of the long yard threw white and swiftly passing beams of light through the windows, and the warmth within belied the menace outside.

At the rear end of the car the flagman worked with one of the tail-lights that burned badly, and the conductor watched him. Gertrude laid aside her furs and threw open her jacket. Her hat she kept on, and sitting in a deep chair told Glover

of her father's arrival from the East on Wednesday and explained how she had set her heart on surprising him that evening at Medicine Bend. "Where are we now?" she asked, as the rumble of the whirling trucks deepened.

"Entering Sleepy Cat Cañon, the Rat River——"

"Oh, I remember this. I ride on the platform almost every time I come through here so I may see where you split the mountain. And every time I see it I ask myself the same question. How came he ever to think of that?"

It needed even hardly so much of an effort to lull her companion's uneasiness. He was a man with no concern at best for danger, except as to the business view of it, and when personally concerned in the hazard his scruples were never deep. Not before had he seen or known Gertrude Brock, for from that moment she gave herself to bewilderment and charm.

The great engine pulling them made so little of its load that they could afford to forget the night; indeed, Gertrude gave him no moments to reflect. From the quick play of their talk at the table she led him to the piano. When, sitting down, she drew off her gloves. She drew them off lazily. When he reminded her that she still had on her jacket she did not look up, but leaning forward

she studied the page of a song on the rack, running the air with her right hand, while she slowly extended her left arm toward him and let him draw the tight sleeve over her wrist and from her shoulder. Then his attempt to relieve her of the second sleeve she wholly ignored, slipping it lightly off and pursuing the song with her left hand while she let the jacket fall in a heap on the floor. By the time Glover had picked it up and she had frowned at him she might safely have asked him, had the fancy struck her, to head the engine for the peak of Sleepy Cat Mountain.

Half-way through a teasing Polish dance she stopped and asked suddenly whether he had had any supper besides the sandwich; and refusing to receive assurances forthwith abandoned the piano, rummaged the staterooms and came back bearing in one hand a very large box of candy and in the other a banjo. She wanted to hear the darky tunes he had strummed at the desert campfire, and making him eat of the chocolates, picked meantime at the banjo herself.

He was so hungry that unconsciously he despatched one entire layer of the box while she talked. She laughed heartily at his appetite, and at his solicitation began tasting the sweetmeats herself. She led him to ask where the box had come from and refused to answer more than to

wonder, as she discarded the tongs and proffered him a bonbon from her fingers, whether possibly she was not having more pleasure in disposing of the contents than the donor of the box had intended. Changing the subject capriciously she recalled the night in the car that he had assisted in Louise Bonner's charade, and his absurdly effective pirouetting in a corner behind the curtain where Louise and he thought no one saw them.

"And, by the way," she added, "you never told me whether your stenographer finally came that day you tried to put me at work."

Glover hung his head.

"Did she?"

"Yes."

"What is she like?"

He laughed and was about to reply when the train conductor coming forward touched him on the shoulder and spoke. Gertrude could not hear what he said, but Glover turned his head and straightened in his chair. "I can't smell anything," he said, presently. With the conductor he walked to the hind end of the car, opened the door, and the three men went out on the platform.

"What is it?" asked Gertrude, when Glover came back.

"One of the journals in the rear truck is heat-

ing. It is curious,' he mused; "as many times as I've ridden in this car I've never known a box to run hot till to-night—just when we don't want it to."

He drew down the slack of the bell cord, pulled it twice firmly and listened. Two freezing pipes from the engine answered; they sounded cold. A stop was made and Glover, followed by the trainmen, went outside. Gertrude walking back saw them in the driving snow beneath the window. Their lamps burned bluishly dim. From the journal box rose a whipping column of black smoke expanding, when water was got on the hot steel, into a blinding explosion of white vapor that the storm snatched away in rolling clouds. There was running to and from the engine and the delay was considerable, but they succeeded at last in rigging a small tank above the wheel so that a stream of water should run into the box.

The men re-entered with their faces stung by the cold, the engine hoarsely signalled and the car started. Glover made little of the incident, but Gertrude observed some preoccupation in his manner. He consulted frequently his watch. Once when he was putting it back she asked to see it. His watch was the only thing of real value he had and he was pleased to show it. It contained a portrait of his mother, and Gertrude, to her sur-

prise and delight, found it. She made him answer question after question, asked him to let her take the watch from the chain and studied the girlish face of this man's mother until she noticed its outlines growing dim and looked impatiently up at the deck burner: the gas was freezing in the storage tanks.

Glover walked to the rear; the journal they told him was running hot again. The engineer had asked not to be stopped till they reached Soda Buttes, where he should have to take water. When he finally slowed for the station the box was ablaze.

The men hastening out found their drip-tank full of ice: there was nothing for it but fresh brasses, and Glover getting down in the snow set the jack with his own hands so it should be set right. The conductor passed him a bar, but Gertrude could not see; she could only hear the ring of the frosty steel. Then with a scream the safety valve of the engine popped and the wind tossed the deafening roar in and out of the car, now half dark. Stunned by the uproar and disturbed by the failing light she left her chair, and going over sat down at the window beneath which Glover was working; some instinct made her seek him. When the car door opened, the flagman entered with both hands filled with snow.

"Are you ready to start?" asked Gertrude. He shook his head and bending over a leather chair rubbed the snow vigorously between his fingers.

"Oh, are you hurt?"

"I froze my fingers and Mr. Glover ordered me in," said the boy. Gertrude noticed for the first time the wind and listened; standing still the car caught the full sweep and it rang in her ears softly, a far, lonely sound.

While she listened the lights of the car died wholly out, but the jargon of noises from the truck kept away some of the loneliness. She knew he would soon come and when the sounds ceased she waited for him at the door and opened it hastily for him. He looked storm-beaten as he held his lantern up with a laugh. Then he examined the flagman's hand, followed Gertrude forward and placed the lantern on the table between them, his face glowing above the hooded light. They were running again, very fast, and the rapid whipping of the trucks was resonant with snow.

"How far now to Medicine?" she smiled.

"We are about half-way. From here to Point of Rocks we follow an Indian trail."

The car was no longer warm. The darkness, too, made Gertrude restless and they searched the storage closets vainly for candles. When they sat down again they could hear the panting of the

engine. The exhaust had the thinness of extreme cold. They were winding on heavy grades among the Buttes of the Castle Creek country, and when the engineer whistled for Castle station the big chime of the engine had shrunk to a baby's treble; it was growing very cold.

As the car slowed, Glover caught an odor of heated oil, and going back found the coddled journal smoking again, and like an honest man cursed it heartily, then he went forward to find out what the stop was for. He came back after some moments. Gertrude was waiting at the door for him. "What did you learn?"

He held his lantern up to light her face and answered her question with another.

"Do you think you could stand a ride in the engine cab?"

"Surely, if necessary. Why?"

"The engine isn't steaming overly well. When we leave this point we get the full wind across the Sweetgrass plains. There's no fit place at this station for you—no place, in fact—or I should strongly advise staying here. But if you stayed in the car there's no certainty we could heat it another hour. If we sidetrack the car here with the conductor and flagman they can stay with the operator and you and I can take the cab into Medicine Bend."

"Whatever you think best."

"I hate to suggest it."

"It is my fault. Shall we go now?"

"As soon as we sidetrack the car. Meantime"—he spoke earnestly—"remember it may mean life—bundle yourself up in everything warm you can find."

"But you?"

"I am used to it."

CHAPTER XVII

STORM

MUFFLED in wraps Gertrude stood at the front door waiting to leave the car. It had been set in on the siding, and the engine, uncoupled, had disappeared, but she could see shifting lights moving near. One, the bright, green-hooded light, her eyes followed. She watched the furious snow drive and sting hornet-like at its rays as it rose or swung or circled from a long arm. Her straining eyes had watched its coming and going every moment since he left her. When his figure vanished her breath followed it, and when the green light flickered again her breath returned.

The men were endeavoring to reset the switch for the main line contact. Three lights were grouped close about the stand, and after the rod had been thrown, Glover went down on his knee feeling for the points under the snow with his hands before he could signal the engine back; one thing he could not afford, a derail. She saw him rise again and saw, dimly, both his arms spread upward and outward. She saw the tiny lantern

swing a cautious incantation, and presently, like a monster apparition, called out of the storm the frosted outlines of the tender loomed from the darkness. The engine was being brought to where this dainty girl passenger could step with least exposure from her vestibule to its cab gangway. With exquisite skill the unwieldy monster, forced in spite of night and stress to do its master's bidding, was being placed for its extraordinary guest.

Picking like a trained beast its backward steps, with cautious strength the throbbing machine, storm-crusted and storm-beaten, hissing its steady defiance at its enemy, halted, and Gertrude was lighted and handed across the short path, passed up inside the canvas door by Glover and helped to the fireman's box.

Out in the storm she heard from the conductor and flagman rough shouts of good luck. Glover nodded to the engineer, the fireman yelled good-by, slammed back the furnace door, and a blinding flash of white heat, for an instant, took Gertrude's senses; when the fireman slammed the door to they were moving softly, the wind was singing at the footboard sash, and the injectors were loading the boiler for the work ahead.

A berth blanket fastened between Gertrude and the side window and a cushion on the box made her comfortable. Under her feet lay a second

blanket. She had come in with a smile, but the gloom of the cab gave no light to a smile. Only the gauge faces high above her showed the flash of the bull's-eyes, and the multitude of sounds overawed her.

On the opposite side she could see the engineer, padded snug in a blouse, his head bullet-tight under a cap, the long visor hanging beak-like over his nose. His chin was swathed in a roll of neck-cloth, and his eyes, whether he hooked the long lever at his side or stretched both his arms to latch the throttle, she could never see. Then, or when his hand fell back to the handle of the air, as it always fell, his profile was silent. If she tried to catch his face he was looking always, statue-like, ahead.

Standing behind him, Glover, with a hand on a roof-brace, steadied himself. In spite of the comforts he had arranged for her, Gertrude, in her corner, felt a lonely sense of being in the way. In her father's car there was never lacking the waiting deference of trainmen; in the cab the men did not even see her.

In the seclusion of the car a storm hardly made itself felt; in the cab she seemed under the open sky. The wind buffeted the glass at her side, rattled in its teeth the door in front of her, drank the steaming flame from the stack monstrously,

and dashed the cinders upon the thin roof above her head with terrifying force. With the gathering speed of the engine the cracking exhaust ran into a confusing din that deafened her, and she was shaken and jolted. The plunging of the cab grew violent, and with every lurch her cushion shifted alarmingly. She resented Glover's placing himself so far away, and could not see that he even looked toward her. The furnace door slammed until she thought the fireman must have thrown in coal enough to last till morning, but unable to realize the danger of overloading the fire he stopped only long enough to turn various valve-wheels about her feet, and with his back bent resumed his hammering and shovelling as if his very salvation were at stake: so, indeed, that night it was.

Gertrude watched his unremitting toil, his shifty balancing on his footing with ever-growing amazement, but the others gave it not the slightest heed. The engineer looked only ahead, and Glover's face behind him never turned. Then Gertrude for the first time looked through her own sash out into the storm.

Strain as she would, her vision could pierce to nothing beyond the ceaseless sweep of the thin, wild snow across the brilliant flow of the headlight. She looked into the white whirl until her eyes

tired, then back to the cab, at the flying shovel of the fireman, the peaked cap of the muffled engineer —at Glover behind him, his hand resting now on the reverse lever hooked high at his elbow. But some fascination drew her eyes always back to that bright circle in the front—to the sinister snow retreating always and always advancing; flowing always into the headlight and out, and above it darkening into the fire that streamed from the dripping stack. A sudden lurch nearly threw her from her seat, and she gave a little scream as the engine righted. Glover beside her like thought caught her outstretched hand. "A curve," he said, bending apologetically toward her ear as she reseated herself. "Is it very trying?"

"No, except that I am in continual fear of falling from my seat—or having to embrace the unfortunate fireman. Oh!" she exclaimed, putting her wrist on Glover's arm as the cab jerked.

"If I could keep out of the fireman's way, I should stand here," he said.

"There is room on the seat here, I think, if you have not wholly deserted me. Oh!"

"I didn't mean to desert you. It is because the snow is packing harder that you are rocked more; the cab has really been riding very smoothly."

She moved forward on the box. "Are you going to sit down?"

"Thank you."

"Oh, don't thank me. I shall feel ever so much safer if you will." He tried to edge up into the corner behind her, pushing the heavy cushion up to support her back. As he did so she turned impatiently, but he could not catch what she said. "Throw it away," she repeated. He chucked the cushion forward below her feet and was about to sit up where she had made room for him when the engineer put both hands to the throttle-bar and shut off. For the first time since they had started Gertrude saw him look around.

"Where's Point of Rocks?" he called to Glover as they slowed, and he looked at his watch. "I'm afraid we're by."

"By?" echoed Glover.

"It looks so."

The fireman opened his furnace with a bang. The engineer got stiffly down and straightened his legs while he consulted with Glover. Both knew they had been running past small stations without seeing them, but to lose Point of Rocks with its freight houses, coal chutes, and water tanks!

They talked for a minute, the engineer climbed up to his seat, the reverse lever was thrown over and they started cautiously back on a hunt for the lost station, both straining their eyes for a glimpse of a light or a building. For twenty minutes they

ran back without finding a solitary landmark. When they stopped, afraid to retreat farther, Glover got out into the storm, walked back and forth, and, chilled to the bone, plunged through the shallow drifts from side to side of the right of way in a vain search for reckoning. Railroad men on the rotary, the second day after, exploded Glover's torpedoes eleven miles west of Point of Rocks, where he had fastened them that night to the rails to warn the ploughs asked for when leaving Sleepy Cat.

With his clothing frozen he swung up into the cab. They were lost. She could see his eyes now. She could see his face. Their perilous state she could not understand, nor know; but she knew and understood what she saw in his face and eyes—the resource and the daring. She saw her lover then, master of the elements, of the night and the danger, and her heart went out to his strength.

The three men talked together and the fireman asked the question that none dared answer, "What about the ploughs?"

Would Giddings hold them at Point of Rocks till the Special reported?

Would he send them out to keep the track open regardless of the Special's reaching Point of Rocks?

Had they themselves reached Point of Rocks at

all? If past it, had they been seen? Were the ploughs ahead or behind? And the fireman asked another question; if they were by the Point tank, would the water hold till they got to Medicine Bend? No one could answer.

There was but one thing to do; to keep in motion. They started slowly. The alternatives were discussed. Glover, pondering, cast them all up, his awful responsibility, unconscious of her peril, watching him from the fireman's box. The engineer looked to Glover instinctively for instructions and, hesitating no longer, he ordered a dash for Medicine Bend regardless of everything.

Without a qualm the engineer opened his throttle and hooked up his bar and the engine leaped blindly ahead into the storm. Glover, in a few words, told Gertrude their situation. He made no effort to disguise it, and to his astonishment she heard him quietly. He cramped himself down at her feet and muffled his head in his cap and collar to look ahead.

They had hardly more than recovered their lost distance, and were running very hard when a shower of heavy blows struck the cab and the engine gave a frantic plunge. Forgetting that he pulled no train McGraw's eyes flew to the air gauge with the thought his train had broken, but the pointer stood steady at the high pressure.

Again the monster machine strained, and again the cab rose and plunged terrifically. The engineer leaped at the throttle like a cat; Gertrude, jolted first backward, was thrown rudely forward on Glover's shoulder, and the fireman slid head first into the oil cans. Worst of all, Glover, in saving Gertrude, put his elbow through the lower glass of the running-board door. The engine stopped and a blast of powdered ice streamed in on them; their eyes met.

She tried to get her breath. "Don't be frightened," he said; "you are all right. Sit perfectly still. What have you got, Paddy?" he called to the engineer. The engineer did not attempt to answer; taking lanterns, the two men climbed out of the cab to investigate. The wind swept through the broken pane and Gertrude slipped down from her seat with relief, while the fireman caught up a big double handful of waste from his box and stuffed it into the broken pane. So intense had the strain of silence become that she would have spoken to him, but the sudden stop sprung the safety-valve, and overwhelmed with its roar she could only watch him in wretched suspense shake the grate, restore his drip can, start his injector, and hammer like one pursued by a fury at the coal. Since she had entered the cab this man had never for one minute rested.

McGraw, followed by Glover, climbed back under the canvas from the gangway. Their clothing, moist with the steam of the cab, had stiffened the instant the wind struck it. McGraw hastening to the furnace seized the chain, jerked open the door and motioned to Glover to come to the fire, but Glover shook his head behind McGraw, his hands on the little man's shoulders, and forced him down in front of the fearful blaze to thaw the gloves from his aching fingers.

All the horror of the storm they were facing had passed Gertrude unfelt until she saw the silent writhing of the crouching man. This was three minutes of the wind that Glover had asked her not to tempt; this was the wind she had tempted. She was glad that Glover, bending over the engineer, holding one hand to the fire as he gazed into it, did not look toward her. From cap to boots he was frozen in snow and ice. The two men, without speaking, left the cab again. They were gone longer. Gertrude felt chills running over her.

"This is a terrible night," she said to the fireman.

"Yes, ma'am, it's pretty bad. I don't know why they'd send white men out into this. I wouldn't send a coyote out."

"They are staying out so long this time," she

murmured. "Could they possibly freeze while they are out, do you think?"

"Sure, they could; but them boys know too much for that. Mr. Glover stays out a week at a time in this kind; he don't care. That man Paddy McGraw is his head engineer in the bucking gang; he don't care—them fellows don't care. But I've got a wife at the Cat and two babies, that's my fix. I never cared neither when I was single, but if I'm carried home now it's seven hundred and fifty relief and a thousand dollars in the A. O. U. W., and that's the end of it for the woman. That's why I don't like to freeze to death, ma'am. But what can you do if you're ordered out? Suppose your woman is a-hangin' to your neck like mine hung to me to-night and cryin'—whatever can you do? You've got to go or lose your job; and if you lose your job who'll feed your kids then?"

McGraw's head appeared under the canvas doorway. Glover did not follow him and Gertrude grew alarmed: but when the canvas rattled and she saw his cap she was waiting for him at the doorway and she put her hands happily on his frozen sleeve: "I'm so glad."

He looked at her with humor in his big eyes.

"I was afraid without you," she added, confusedly.

He laughed. "There's nothing to be afraid of."

"Oh, you are so cold. Come to the fire."

"What do you think about the ploughs now?" he asked of McGraw, who had climbed up to his seat.

"How many is there?" returned the engineer as Glover shivered before the fire.

"There may be a thousand."

"What do you want me to do?"

"There's only one thing, Paddy. Go through them," answered Glover, slamming shut the furnace door.

McGraw laid his bar over, and, like one putting his house in order, looked at his gauges and tried his valves.

"What is it?" whispered Gertrude, at Glover's side.

He turned. "We've struck a bunch of sheep."

"Sheep?"

"In a storm they drift to keep from freezing out in the open. These sheep have bunched in a little cut out of the wind," he explained, as the fireman sprinkled the roaring furnace. "You had better get up on your seat, Miss Brock."

"But what are you going to do?"

"Run through them."

"Run through them? Do you mean to kill them?"

"We shall have to kill a few; there isn't much danger."

"But oh, must you mangle those poor creatures huddling in the cut out of the storm? Oh, don't do that."

"We can't help it."

"Oh, yes, yes, you can if you will, I am sure." She looked at him imploringly.

"Indeed I cannot. Listen a moment." He spoke steadily. The wheels were turning under her, the engine was backing for the dash. "We know now the ploughs are not ahead of us, for the cut is full of sheep and snow. If they are behind us we are in grave danger. They may strike us at any moment—that means, do you understand? death. We can't go back now; there's too much snow even if the track were clear. To stay here means to freeze to death." She turned restively from him. "Could you have thought it a joke," he asked, slowly, "to run a hundred and seventy miles through a blizzard?" She looked away and her sob cut him to the heart. "I did not mean to wound you," he murmured. "It's only that you don't realize what self-preservation means. I wouldn't kill a fly unnecessarily, but do you think I could stand it to see anyone in this cab mangled by a plough behind us—or to see you freeze to death if the engine should die and we're caught

here twelve hours? It is our lives or theirs, that's all, and they will freeze anyway. We are only putting them out of their misery. Come; we are starting." He helped her to her seat.

"Don't leave me," she faltered. The cylinder cocks were drumming wildly. "Which ever way we turn there's danger," he admitted, reluctantly, "a steam pipe might burst. You must cover your face." She drew the high collar of her coat around her neck and buried her face in her muff, but he caught up a blanket and dropped it completely over her head; then locking her arm in his own he put one heavy boot against the furnace door, and, braced between the woman he loved and the fire-box, nodded to the engineer—McGraw gave head.

Furred with snow, and bearded fearfully with ice; creeping like a mountain-cat on her prey; quivering under the last pound of steam she could carry, and hissing wildly as McGraw stung her heels again and again from the throttle, the great engine moved down on the blocked cut.

Unable to reckon distance or resistance but by instinct, and forced to risk everything for headway, McGraw pricked the cylinders till the smarting engine roared. Then, crouching like a jockey for a final cruel spur he goaded the monster for the last time and rose in his stirrups for the crash.

The Daughter of a Magnate

With never a slip or a stumble, hardly reeling in her ponderous frame, the straining engine plunged headlong into the curve. Only once, she staggered and rolled; once only, three reckless men rose to answer death as it knocked at their hearts; but their hour was not come, and the engine struggled, righted, and parted the living drift from end to end.

CHAPTER XVIII

DAYBREAK

CROUCHING under the mountains in the grip of the storm Medicine Bend slept battened in blankets and beds. All night at the Wickiup, O'Neill and Giddings, gray with anxiety, were trying to keep track of Glover's Special. It was the only train out that night on the mountain division. For the first hour or two they kept tab on her with little trouble, but soon reports began to falter or fail, and the despatchers were reduced at last to mere rumors. They dropped boards ahead of Special 1018, only to find to their consternation that she was passing them unheeded.

Once, at least, they knew that she herself had slipped by a night station unseen. Oftener, with blanched faces they would hear of her dashing like an apparition past a frightened operator huddled over his lonely stove, a spectral flame shot across the fury of the sky—as if the dread night breathing on the scrap-pile and the grave had called from other nights and other storms a wraith of riven engines and slaughtered men to one last phantom race with death and the wind.

Within two hours of division headquarters a train ran lost—lost as completely as if she were crossing the Sweetgrass plains on pony trails instead of steel rails. Not once but a dozen times McGraw and Glover, pawning their lives, left the cab with their lanterns in a vain endeavor to locate a station, a siding, a rock. Numbed and bitten at last with useless exposure they cast effort to the wind, gave the engine like a lost horse her head, and ran through everything for headquarters and life. Consultation was abandoned, worry put away, one good chance set against every other chance and taken in silence.

At five o'clock that morning despatchers and night men under the Wickiup gables, sitting moodily around the big stove, sprang to their feet together. From up the distant gorge, dying far on the gale, came the long chime blast of an engine whistle; it was the lost Special.

They crowded to the windows to dispute and listen. Again the heavy chime was sprung and a second blast, lasting and defiant, reached the Wickiup—McGraw was whistling for the upper yard and the long night of anxiety was ended. Unable to see a car length into the storm howling down the yard, save where the big arc-lights of the platform glared above the semaphores, the men swarmed to the windows to catch a glimpse of the belated

engine. When the rays of its electric headlight pierced the Western night they shouted like boys, ran to the telephones, and while the roundhouse, the superintendent, and the master-mechanic were getting the news the Special engine steamed slowly into sight through the whirling snow and stopped at the semaphore. So a liner shaken in the teeth of a winter storm, battered by heading seas, and swept by stiffening spray, rides at last, ice-bound, staggering, majestic, into port.

The moment they struck the mountain-path into the Bend, McGraw and Glover caught their bearings by the curves, and Glover, standing at Gertrude's elbow, told her they were safe.

Not until he had laughed into her ear something that the silent McGraw, lying on his back under the engine with a wrench, when he confessed he never expected to see Medicine Bend again, had said of her own splendid courage did the flood spring from her eyes.

When Glover added that they were entering the gorge, and laughingly asked if she would not like to sound the whistle for the yard limits, she smiled through tears and gave him her hand to be helped down, cramped and chilled, from her corner.

At the moment that she left the cab she faltered again. McGraw stripped his cap from his head

as she turned to speak. She took from the breast of her blouse her watch, dainty as a jewel, and begged him to take it, but he would not.

She drew her glove and stripped from her finger a ring.

"This is for your wife," she said, pressing it into his hand.

"I have no wife."

"Your sister."

"Nor sister."

"Keep it for your bride," she whispered, retreating. "It is yours. Good-by, good-by!"

She sprang from the gangway to Glover's arms and the snow. The storm drove pitilessly down the bare street as she clung to his side and tried to walk the half block to the hotel. The wind, even for a single minute, was deadly to face. No light, no life was anywhere visible. He led her along the lee of the low street buildings, and mindful of the struggle it was to make headway at all turned half between her and the wind to give her the shelter of his shoulders, halting as she stumbled to encourage her anew. He saw then that she was struggling in the darkness for breath, and without a word he bent over her, took her up like a child and started on, carrying her in his arms.

If he frightened her she gave no sign. She held herself for an instant uncertain and aloof, though she could not but feel the heavy draught she made on his strength. The wind stung her cheeks; her breath caught again in her throat and she heard him implore her to turn her face, to turn it from the wind. He stumbled as he spoke, and as she shielded her face from the deadly cold, one hand slipped from her muff. Reaching around his head she drew his storm-cap more closely down with her fingers. When he thanked her she tried to speak and could not, but her glove rested an instant where the wind struck his cheek; then her head hid upon his shoulder and her arms wound slowly and tightly around his neck.

He kicked open the door of the hotel with one blow of his foot and set her down inside.

In the warm dark office, breathing unsteadily, they faced each other. "Can you, Gertrude, marry that man and break my heart?" He caught up her two hands with his words.

"No," she answered, brokenly. "Are you sure you are not frozen—ears or cheeks or hands?"

"You won't marry him, Gertrude, and break my heart? Tell me you won't marry him."

"No, I won't."

"Tell me again."

"Shall I tell you everything?"

"If you have mercy for me as I have love for you."

"I ran away from him to-night. He came out with the directors and telegraphed he would be at the Springs in the afternoon for his answer, and—I ran away. He has his answer long ago and I would not see him."

"Brave girl!"

"Oh, I wasn't brave, I was a dreadful coward. But I thought——"

"What?"

"—I could be brave, if I found as brave a man—as you."

"Gertrude, if I kiss you I never can give you up. Do you understand what that means? I never in life or death can give you up, Gertrude, do you understand me?"

She was crying on his shoulder. "Oh, yes, I understand," and he heard from her lips the maddening sweetness of his boy name. "I understand," she sobbed. "I don't care, Ab—if only—you will be kind to me."

It was only a moment later—her head had not yet escaped from his arm, for Glover found for the first time that it is one thing to get leave to kiss a lovely woman and wholly another to get the necessary action on the conscience-stricken creature

—she had not yet, I say, escaped, when a locomotive whistle was borne from the storm faintly in on their ears. To her it meant nothing, but she felt him start. "What is it?" she whispered.

"The ploughs!"

"The ploughs?"

"The snow-ploughs that followed us. Twenty minutes behind—twenty minutes between us and death, Gertrude, in that blizzard, think of it. That must mean we are to live."

The solemn thought naturally suggested, to Glover at least, a resumption of the status quo, but as he was locating, in the dark, there came from behind the stove a mild cough. The effect on the construction engineer of the whole blizzard was to that cough as nothing. Inly raging he seated Gertrude—indeed, she sunk quite faintly into a chair, and starting for the stove Glover dragged from behind it Solomon Battershawl. "What are you doing here?" demanded Glover, savagely.

"I'm night clerk, Mr. Glover—ow——"

"Night clerk? Very well, Solomon," muttered Glover, grimly, "take this young lady to the warmest room in the house at once."

"Every room's full, Mr. Glover. Trains were all tied up last night."

"Then show her to my room."

"Your room's occupied."

"My room occupied, you villain? What do you mean? Throw out whoever's in it instantly."

"Mr. Brock is in your room."

Gertrude had come over to the stove.

"Mr. Brock!"

"My father!"

"Yes, sir; yes, ma'am."

Gertrude and Glover looked at one another.

"Mr. Blood brought him up last night," said Solomon.

"Where's Mr. Blood?"

"He hasn't come up from the Wickiup. They said he was worried over a special from the Cat that was caught in the blizzard. Your laundry came in all right last night, Mr. Glover——"

"Hang the laundry."

"I paid for it."

"Will you cease your gabble? If Mr. Blood's room is empty take Miss Block up there and rouse a chambermaid instantly to attend her. Do you hear?"

"Shall I throw out Mr. Brock?"

"Let him alone, stupid. What's the matter with the lights?"

"The wires are down."

"Get a candle for Miss Brock. Now, will you make haste?" Solomon, when he heard the name,

stared at Miss Brock—but when he recognized her he started without argument and was gone an unconscionably long time.

They sat down where they could feast on each other's eyes in the glow of the coal-stove.

"You have looked so worried all night," said Gertrude, in love's solicitude; "were you afraid we should be lost?"

"No, I didn't intend we should be lost."

"What was it? What is it that makes you so careworn?"

"Nothing special."

"But you mustn't have any secrets from me now. What is it?"

"Do you want to know?"

"Yes."

"I couldn't find time to get shaved before we left Sleepy Cat——"

She rose with both hands uplifted: "Shades of vain heroes! Have I wasted my sympathy all night on a man who has been saving my life with perfect calmness and worrying because he couldn't get shaved?"

"Can you dispassionately say that I don't need barbering?"

"No. But this is what I will say, silly fellow—you don't know much about a woman's heart, do you, Ab? When I first looked at you I thought

you were the homeliest man I had ever seen, do you know that?"

Glover fingered his offending chin and looked at her somewhat pathetically.

"But last night"—her quick mouth was so eloquent—"last night I watched you. I saw your face lighted by the anger of the storm. I knew then what those heavy, homely lines below your eyes were for—strength. And I saw your eyes, to me so dull at first, wake and fill with such a light and burn so steadily hour after hour that I knew I had never seen eyes like yours. I knew you would save me—that is what made me so brave, goosie. Sit right where you are, please."

She slipped out of her chair; he pursued. "If you will say such things and then run into the dark corners," he muttered. But when Solomon appeared with a water-pitcher they were ready for him.

"Now what has kept you all this time?" glared Glover, insincerely.

"I couldn't find any ice-water."

"Ice-water!"

"Every pipe is froze solid, but I chopped up some ice and brought that."

"Ice-water, you double-dyed idiot! Go get your candle."

"Yes, sir."

"Don't be so cross," whispered Gertrude. "You were so short with that poor fireman tonight, and he told me such a pitiful story about being ordered out and having to go or lose his position——"

"Did Foley tell you that?"

"Yes."

"Surely, nerve runs in his family as well as his cousin's. The rascal came because I hung up a little purse for a fireman at the roundhouse, and he nearly had a fight with another fellow that wanted to cut him out of the job."

"Such a cheat! How much did you offer him?"

"Not very much."

"But how much?"

"Twenty-five dollars, and, by heavens, he dunned me for it just after we started."

"But his poor wife hung to his neck when he left——"

"No doubt. She has pulled all the hair out of his head twice that I know of——"

"And I gave him my purse with all the money I had in it."

"How much?"

"About three hundred dollars."

"Three hundred dollars! Foley will lay off two months and take the whole family back to

Pittsburg. Now, here's your candle and chopped ice and Mr. Battershawl."

Gertrude turned for a last whisper—"What should you say if papa came down?"

"What should I say? He would probably say, 'Mr. Glover, I have your room.' 'Don't mention it,' I should reply, 'I have your daughter.' " But Mr. Brock did not come down.

Barely half an hour later, while Glover waited with anxiety at the foot of the stairs, Gertrude reappeared, and with her loveliness all new, walked shyly and haltingly down each step toward him.

Not a soul about the hotel office had stirred, and Glover led her to the retired little parlor, which was warm and dim, to reassure himself that the fluttering girl was all his own. Unable to credit the fulness of their own happiness they sat confiding to each other all the sweet trifles, now made doubly sweet, of their strange acquaintance. Before six o'clock, and while their seclusion was still their own, a hot breakfast was served to them where they sat, and day broke on storm without and lovers within.

CHAPTER XIX

SUSPENSE

WHAT shapes the legends of the Wickiup? Is it because in the winter night the wind never sleeps in the gorge above the headquarters shack that despatchers talk yet of a wind that froze the wolf and the sheep and the herder to marble together? Is it because McGraw runs no more that switchmen tell of the run he made over Sweetgrass the night he sent a plough through eight hundred head of sheep in less than a tenth as many seconds? Could the night that laid the horse and the hunter side by side in the Spider Park drift have been wildest of all wild mountain nights? Or is it because Gertrude Brock and her railroad lover rode out its storm together that mountain men say there was never a storm like that? What shapes the Wickiup legends?

For three days Medicine Bend did not see the sun. Veering uneasily, springing from every quarter at once, the wind wedged the gray clouds up the mountain sides only to roll them like avalanches down the ragged passes. At the end of the week snow was falling.

Not until the morning of the third day when reports came in of the unheard-of temperatures in the North and West did the weather cause real apprehension. The division never had been in such a position to protect its winter traffic—for a year Callahan, Blood, and Glover had been overhauling and assembling the old and the new bucking equipment. But the wind settled at last in the northeast, and when it stilled the mercury sunk, and when it rose the snow fell, roofing the sheds on the passes, levelling the lower gulches, and piling up reserves along the cuts.

The first trouble came on the main line in the Heart Mountains, and Morris Blood, with the roadmaster of the sixth district and Benedict Morgan, got after it with a crew together.

Between the C bridge and Potter's Gap they spent two days with a rotary and a flanger and three consolidated engines and went home, leaving everything swept clean, only to learn in the morning that west of the gap there were four feet of fresh snow clear to Rozelle. From the northern ranges came unusual reports of the continued severity of the storms. It was hardly a series of storms, for that winter the first storm that crossed the line lasted three weeks.

In the interval Bucks was holding to the directors at Medicine Bend, waiting for the weather

to settle enough to send them to the coast. The Pittsburg party waited at Glen Tarn for Mr. Brock's word to join him. At the Bend, Gertrude made love to her father, forfending the awful moment of disclosure that must come, and the cause of her hidden happiness and trouble strenuously made love to her.

To the joy of the conspirators, Bucks held Glover closely at headquarters, keeping him closeted for long periods on the estimates that were in final cooking for the directors; and so dense are great people and so keen the simple, that Gertrude held her lone seat of honor beside her father, at the table of the great financiers in the dining-room, without the remotest suspicion on their parts that the superb woman meeting them three times a day was carrying on a proudly-hidden love affair with the muscular, absorbed-looking man who sat alone across the aisle.

But the asthmatic old pastry cook, who weighed at least two hundred and thirty pounds and had not even seen the inside of the dining-room for three years, was thoroughly posted on every observable phase of the affair down to the dessert orders; and no one acquainted with the frank profanity of a mountain meat cook will doubt that the best of everything went hot from the range to Glover and Gertrude. Dollar tips and five-dollar

tips from Eastern epicures could not change this, for the meals were served by waitresses who felt a personal responsibility in the issue of the pretty affair of the heart.

The whole second floor of the little hotel had been reserved for the directors' party, and among the rooms was the parlor. There Glover called regularly every evening on Mr. Brock, who, somewhat at a loss to understand the young man's interest, excused himself after the first few minutes and left Gertrude to entertain the gentleman who had been *so* kind to everybody that she could not be discourteous even if he was somewhat tedious.

One night after a particularly happy evening near the piano for Gertrude and Glover, Mr. Brock, re-entering the parlor, found the somewhat tedious gentleman bending very low, as his daughter said good-night, over her hand; in fact, the gentleman that had been so kind to everybody was kissing it.

When Glover recovered his perpendicular the cold magnate of the West End stood between the folding doors looking directly at him. If the owner of several trunk lines expected his look to inspire consternation he was disappointed. Each of the lovers feared but one person in the world; that was the other. Gertrude, with perhaps an

extra touch of dignity, put her compromised hand to her belt for her handkerchief. Glover finished the sentence he was in the middle of—"If I am not ordered out. Good-night."

But when Mr. Brock had turned abruptly on his heel and disappeared between the portières they certainly did look at one another.

"Have I got you into trouble now?" murmured Glover, penitently. Uneasiness was apparent in her expression, but with her back to the piano Gertrude stood steadfast.

"Not," she said, with serious tenderness, "just now. Don't you know? It was the first, the very first, day you looked into my eyes, dear, that you got me into trouble."

Her pathetic sweetness moved him. Then he flamed with determination. He would take the burden on himself—would face her father at once, but she hushed him in real alarm and said, that battle she must fight unaided; it was after all only a little one, she whispered, after the one she had fought with herself. But he knew she glossed over her anxiety, for when he withdrew her eyes looked tears though they shed none.

In the morning there were two vacancies at the breakfast table; neither Gertrude nor her father appeared. When Glover returned to the hotel at five o'clock the first person he saw was Mrs. Whit-

ney. She and Marie, with the doctor and Allen Harrison, had arrived on the first train out of the Springs in four days, and Mrs. Whitney's greeting of Glover in the office was disconcerting. It scarcely needed Gertrude's face at dinner, as she tried to brave the storm that had set in, or her reluctant admission when she saw him as she passed up to her room that she and her father had been up nearly the whole of the night before, to complete his depression.

Every effort he made during the evening to speak to Gertrude was balked by some untoward circumstance, but about nine o'clock they met on the parlor floor and Glover led her to the elevator, which was being run that night by Solomon Battershawl. Solomon lifted them to the top floor and made busy at the end of the hall while they had five short minutes. When they descended he knew what she was facing. Even Marie, the one friend he thought he had in the family, had taken a stand against them, and her father was deaf to every appeal.

They parted, depressed, with only a hand pressure, a look and a whisper of constancy. At midnight, as Glover lay thinking, a crew caller rapped at his door. He brought a message and held his electric pocket-lamp near, while Glover, without getting up, read the telegram. It was from Bucks

asking if he could take a rotary at once into the Heart Mountains.

Glover knew snow had been falling steadily on the main line for two days. East of the middle range it was nothing but extreme cold, west it had been one long storm. Morris Blood was at Goose River. The message was not an order; but on the division there was no one else available at the moment that could handle safely such a battery of engines as would be needed to bore the drifts west of the sheds. Moreover, Glover knew how Bucks had chafed under the conditions that kept the directors on his hands. They were impatient to get to the coast, and the general manager was anxious to be rid of them as soon as there should be some certainty of getting them safely over the mountains.

Glover, on the back of the telegram, scrawled a note to Crosby, the master-mechanic, and turned over not to sleep, but to think—and to think, not of the work before him, but of her and of her situation. A roundhouse caller roused him at half-past three with word that the snow battery was marked up for four o'clock. He rose, dressed deliberately and carefully for the exposure ahead, and sat down before a candle to tell Gertrude, in a note, when he hoped to be back.

Locking his trunk when he had done, he snuffed

out the candle and closed his room door behind him. The hall was dark, but he knew its turns, and the carpeted stairs gave no sound as he walked down. At the second floor there were two stairways by which he could descend. He looked up the dim corridor toward where she slept. Somehow he could not make up his mind to leave without passing her room.

His heavy tread was noiseless, and at her door he paused and put his hand uncertainly upon the casing. In the darkness his head bent an instant on his outstretched arm—it had never before been hard to go; then he turned and walked softly away.

At the breakfast table and at the dinner table the talk was of the snow. The evening paper contained a column of despatches concerning the blockade, now serious, in the eighth district. Half the first page was given to alarming reports from the cattle ranges. Two mail-carriers were reported lost in the Sweetgrass country, and a ski runner from Fort Steadman, which had been cut off for eight days, told of thirty-five feet of snow in the Whitewater hills.

Sleepy Cat reported eighteen inches of fresh snow, and a second delayed despatch under the same date-line reported that a bucking special

from Medicine Bend, composed of a rotary, a flanger, and five locomotives had passed that point at 9 A.M. for the eighth district.

Gertrude found no interest in the news or the discussion. She could only wonder why she did not see Glover during the day, and when he made no appearance at dinner she grew sick with uncertainty. Leaving the dining-room ahead of the party in some vague hope of seeing him, Solomon hurried up with the note that Glover had left to be given her in the morning. The boy had gone off duty before she left her room and had overslept, but instead of waiting for his apologies she hastened to her room and locked her door to devour her lover's words. She saw that he had written her in the dead of night to explain his going, and to say good-by. Bucks' message he had enclosed. "But I shall work very hard every hour I am gone to get back the sooner," he promised, "and if you hear of the snow flying over the peaks on the West End you will know that I am behind it and headed straight for you."

When Marie and Mrs. Whitney came up, Gertrude sat calmly before the grate fire, but the note lay hidden over her heart, for in it he had whispered that while he was away every night at eight o'clock and every morning, no matter where she should be, or what doing, he should kiss her lips

and her eyes as he had kissed them that first morning in the dark, warm office. When eight o'clock came her aunt and her sister sat with her; but Gertrude at eight o'clock, musing, was with her lover and her lips and eyes again were his to do with what he would. Later Doctor Lanning came in and she roused to hear the news about the snow. Between Sleepy Cat and Bear Dance two passenger trains were stalled, and on Blackbird hill the snow was reported four feet deep on the level.

When the doctor had gone and Marie had retired, Gertrude's aunt talked to her seriously about her father, whose almost frantic condition over what he called Gertrude's infatuation was alarming.

Her aunt explained how her final refusal of Allen Harrison, a connection on which her father had set his heart, might result in the total disruption of the plans which held so mighty interests together; and how impossible it was that he should ever consent to her throwing herself away on an obscure Western man.

Only occasionally would Gertrude interrupt. "Don't strip the poor man of everything, auntie. If it must come to family—the De Gallons and Cirodes and Glovers were lords of the Mississippi when our Hessian forefathers were hiding from Washington in the Trenton hazelbushes."

She could meet her aunt's fears with jests and her tears with smiles until the worried lady chancing on a deeper chord disarmed her. "You know you are my pet, Gertrude. I am your foster-mother, dear, and I have tried to be mother to you and Marie, and sister to my brother every day of my life since your mother died. And if you——"

Then Gertrude's arms would enfold her and her head hide on her aunt's shoulder, and they would part utterly miserable.

One morning when Gertrude woke it was snowing and Medicine Bend was cut completely off from the western end of the division. The cold in the desert districts had made it impossible to move freights. During the night they had been snowed in on sidings all the way from Sleepy Cat east. By night every wire was down; the last message in was a private one from Glover, with the ploughs, dated at Nine Mile.

Solomon brought the telegram up to Gertrude with the intimation that, confidentially, Mr. Blood's assistant, in charge of the Wickiup, would be glad to hear any news it might contain about the blockade, as communication was now cut entirely off.

Gertrude told the messenger only that she understood the blockade in the eighth district had been lifted and that the ploughs were headed east.

Then as the lad looked wonderingly at her, she started. Have I, she asked herself, already become a part of this life, that they come to me for information? But she did not add that the signer of the message had promised to be with her in twenty-four hours.

That day for the first time in eighteen years, no trains ran in or out of Medicine Bend, and an entire regiment of cavalry bound for the Philippines was known to be buried in a snowdrift near San Pete. The big hotel swarmed with snowbound travellers. The snow fell all day, but to Gertrude's relief her father and the men of the party were at the Wickiup with Bucks, who had come in during the night with reinforcements from McCloud. Unfortunately, the batteries that followed him were compelled to double about next morning to open the line back across the plains.

The gravity of the situation about her, the spectacle of the struggle, now vast and all absorbing, made by the operating department to cope with the storm and cold, and the anxieties of her own position plunged Gertrude into a gloom she had never before conceived of. Her aunt's forebodings and tears, her father's unbending silence and aloofness, made escape from her depression impossible. When Solomon appeared she besought him surreptitiously for news, but though Solomon

fairly staggered with the responsibilities of his position he could supply nothing beyond rumors—rumors all tending to magnify the reliance placed on Glover's capabilities in stress of this sort, but not at the moment definitely locating him.

Next morning the creeping eastern light had not yet entered her room when a timid rap aroused her. Solomon was outside the door with news. "The ploughs will be here in an hour," he whispered.

"The ploughs?"

Solomon couldn't resist the low appeal for more definite word. He had no information more than he had given, but he bravely journalized, "Mr. Glover and everybody, ma'am."

"Oh, thank you, Solomon."

She rose, with wings beating love across the miles that separated him from her. Day with its perplexities may beset, the stars bring sometimes only grief; but to lovers morning brings always joy, because it brings hope. She detained Solomon a moment. A resolve fixed itself at once in her heart; to greet her lover the instant he arrived. She could dress and slip down to the station and back before the others awoke even. It was hazardous, but what venture is less attractive for a hazard if it bring a lover? She made her rapid toilet with affection in her supple fingers, and wel-

come glowing in her quick eyes, and she left her room with the utmost care. Enveloped in the Newmarket, because he loved it, her hands in her big muff, and her cheeks closely veiled, she joined Solomon in the reception room downstairs.

The morning was gray with a snow fog hanging low, and feathery flakes were sinking upon the whitened street. "Listen!" cried the boy, excitedly, as they neared the Wickiup. From somewhere in the sky came the faint scream of a locomotive whistle. "That's them, all right. Gee! I'd like to buck snow."

"Would you?"

"Would I? Wouldn't you?"

A hundred men were strung along the platform, and a sharper blast echoed across the upper flat. "There they are!" cried Solomon, pressing forward. Gertrude saw a huge snow-covered monster swing heavily around the yard hill. The ploughs were at hand. The head engine whistled again, those in the battery took up the signal, and heeled in snow they bore down on the Wickiup whistling a chorus. Before the long battery had halted, the men about Gertrude were running toward the cabs, cheering. Many men poured out of the battered ice-bound cars at the end of the string. While Gertrude's eyes strained with expectation a collie dog shot headlong to the platform from the steps

of the hind caboose, and wheeling about, barked madly until, last of three men together, Glover, carrying his little bag, swung down, and listening to his companions, walked leisurely forward.

Swayed by the excitement which she did not fully understand all about her, Gertrude, with swimming eyes, saw Solomon dash toward Glover and catch his bag. As the boy spoke to him she saw Glover's head lift in the deliberate surprise she knew so well. She felt his wandering eyes bend upon her, and his hand rose in suppressed joyfulness.

Doubt, care, anxiety, fled before that gesture. Stumah, wild with delight, bounded at her, and before she could greet him, Glover, a giant in his wrappings, was bending over her, his eyes burning through the veil that hid her own. She heard without comprehending his words; she asked questions without knowing she asked, because his hand so tightly clasped hers.

They walked up the platform and he stopped but once; to speak to the snugly clad man that got down from the head engine. Gertrude recognized the good-natured profile under the long cap; Paddy McGraw lifted his visor as she advanced and with a happy laugh greeted him.

Smiling at her welcome he drew off his glove and took from an inner pocket her ring and held

it out on his hand. "I am taking good care of my souvenir."

"I hope you are taking good care of yourself," Gertrude responded, "because every time I ride in the mountains, Mr. McGraw, I want you for engineer."

Glover was saying something to her as they turned away together, but she gave no heed to his meaning. She caught only the low, pretty uncertainty in his utterance, the unfailing little break that she loved in his tone.

He was saying, "Yes—some of it thirty feet. Morris Blood is tunnelling on the Pilot branch this morning; it's bad up there, but the main line is clear from end to end. Surely, you never looked so sweet in your life. Gertrude, Gertrude, you're a beautiful girl. Do you know that? What are those fellows shouting about? Me? Not at all. They're cheering you."

CHAPTER XX

DEEPENING WATERS

THE stolen interview of the early morning was the consolation of the day. Gertrude confided a resolve to Glover. She had thought it all out and he must, she said, talk to her father. Nothing would ever ever come of a situation in which the two never met. The terrible problem was how to arrange the interview. Her father had already declined to meet Glover at all. Moreover, Mr. Brock had a fund of silence that approximated absolute zero, and Gertrude dreaded the result if Glover, in presenting his case, should stop at any point and succumb to the chill.

During such intervals as they managed to meet, the lovers could discuss nothing but the crisis that confronted them. The definite clearing of the line meant perhaps an early separation and something must be done, if ever, at once.

In the evening Gertrude made a long appeal to her aunt to intercede for her, and another to Marie, who, softening somewhat, had spent half an hour before dinner in discussing the situation calmly with Glover; but over the proposed inter-

view Marie shook her head. She had great influence with her father, but candidly owned she should dread facing him on a matter he had definitely declined to discuss.

They parted at night without light on their difficulties. In the morning Glover made several ineffectual efforts to see Gertrude early. He had an idea that they had forgotten the one who could advise and help them better than any other—his friend and patron, Bucks.

The second vice-president was now closer in a business way to Mr. Brock than anyone else in the world. They were friends of very early days, of days when they were laying together the foundations of their careers. It was Bucks who had shown Mr. Brock the stupendous possibilities in reorganizing the system, who was responsible for his enormous investment, and each reposed in the other entire confidence. Gertrude constantly contended that it was only a question of her father's really knowing Glover, and that if her lover could be put, as she knew him, before her father, he must certainly give way. Why not, then, take Bucks into their confidence?

It seemed like light from heaven to Glover, and he was talking to Gertrude when there came a rap at the door of the parlor and a messenger entered with a long despatch from Callahan at Sleepy Cat.

The message was marked delayed in transmission. Glover walked with it to the window and read:

"Doubleday's outfit wrecked early this morning on Pilot Hill while bucking. Head engine, the 927, McGraw, partly off track. Tender crushed the cab. Doubleday instantly killed and McGraw badly hurt. Morris Blood is reported to have been in the cab also, but cannot be found. Have sent Doubleday and McGraw to Medicine Bend in my car and am starting with wrecking crew for the Hill."

"What is it?" murmured Gertrude, watching her lover's face. He studied the telegram a long time and she came to his side. He raised his eyes from the paper in his hand and looked out of the window. "What is it?" she whispered.

"Pilot Hill."

"I do not understand, dearest."

"A wreck."

"Oh, is it serious?"

His eyes fell again on the death message. "Morris Blood was in it and they can't find him."

"Oh, oh."

"A bad place; a bad, bad place." He spoke, absently, then his eyes turned upon her with inexpressible tenderness.

"But why can't they find him, dearest?"

"The track is blasted out of the mountain side for half a mile. Bucks said it would be a graveyard, but I couldn't get to the mines in any other way. Gertrude, I must go to the Wickiup at once to get further news. This message has been delayed, the wires are not right yet."

"Will you come back soon?"

"Just the minute I can get definite news about Morris. In half an hour, probably."

She tried to comfort him when he left her. She knew of the deep attachment between the two men, and she encouraged her lover to hope for the best. Not until he had gone did she fully realize how deeply he was moved. At the window she watched him walk hurriedly down the street, and as he disappeared, reflected that she had never seen such an expression on his face as when he read the telegram.

The half hour went while she reflected. Going downstairs she found the news of the wreck had spread about the hotel, and widely exaggerated accounts of the disaster were being discussed. Mrs. Whitney and Marie were out sleighriding, and by the time the half hour had passed without word from Glover, Gertrude gave way to her restlessness. She had a telegram to send to New York—an order for bonbons—and she determined

to walk down to the Wickiup to send it; she might, she thought, see Glover and hear his news sooner.

When she approached the headquarters building unusual numbers of railroad men were grouped on the platform, talking. Messengers hurried to and from the roundhouse. A blown engine attached to a day coach was standing near and men were passing in and out of the car. Gertrude made her way to the stairs unobserved, walked leisurely up to the telegraph office and sent her message. The long corridors of the building, gloomy even on bright days, were quite dark as she left the operators' room and walked slowly toward the quarters of the construction department.

The door of the large anteroom was open and the room empty. Gertrude entered hesitatingly and looked toward Glover's office. His door also was ajar, but no one was within. The sound of voices came from a connecting room and she at once distinguished Glover's tones. It was justification: with her coin purse she tapped lightly on the door casing, and getting no response stepped inside the office and slipped into a chair beside his desk to await him. The voices came from a room leading to Callahan's apartments.

Glover was asking questions, and a man whose voice she could now hear breaking with sobs, was

answering. "Are you sure your signals were right?" she heard Glover ask slowly and earnestly; and again, patiently, "how could you be doubled up without the flanger's leaving the track?" Then the man would repeat his story.

"You must have had too much behind you," Glover said once.

"Too much?" echoed the man, frantically. "Seven engines behind us all day yesterday. Paddy told him the minute he got in the cab she wouldn't never stand it. He told him it as plain as a man could tell a man. Then because we went through a thousand feet in the gap like cheese he ordered us up the hill. When we struck the big drift it was slicing rock, Mr. Glover. Paddy told him she wouldn't never stand it. The very first push we let go in a hundred feet with the engine churning her damned drivers off. We went into it twice that way. I could see it was shoving the tender up in the air every time and told Doubleday—oh, if you'd been there! The next time we sent the plough through the first crust and drove a wind-pocket maybe forty or fifty yards and hit the ice with the seven engines jamming into us. My God! she doubled up like a jack-knife—Pat, Pat, Pat."

"Can you recollect where Blood was standing when you buckled?"

"In the right gangway." There was a pause. "He must have dropped," she heard Glover say.

"Then he'll never drop again, Mr. Glover, for if he slipped off the ties he'd drop a thousand feet."

"The heaviest snow is right at the top of the hill?"

"Yes, sir."

"If we can cross the hill we can find him anyway."

"Don't try to get across that hill till you put in five hundred shovellers, Mr. Glover."

"That would take a week. If he's alive we must get him within twenty-four hours. He may freeze to death to-night."

"Don't try to cross that hill with a plough, Mr. Glover. Mind my words. It's no use. I've bucked with you many a time—you know that."

"Yes."

"You're going to your death when you try that."

"There's the doctor now, Foley," Glover answered. "Let him look you over carefully. Come this way."

The voices receded. Listening to the talk, little of which she understood, a growing fear had come over Gertrude. Her eyes had pierced the gray light about her, and as she heard Glover walk

away she rose hurriedly and stepped to the doorway to detain him. Glover had disappeared, but before her, stretched on the couch back of the table, lay McGraw. She knew him instantly, and so strangely did the gloom shroud his features that his steady eyes seemed looking straight at her. She divined that he had been brought back hurt. A chill passed over her, a horror. She hesitated a moment, and, fascinated, stepped closer; then she knew she was staring at the dead.

Terror-stricken and with sinking strength she made her way to the hotel and slipped up to the parlor. Throwing off her wraps she went to the window; Glover was coming up the street. There was only a moment in which to collect herself. She hastened to her bedroom, wet her forehead with cologne, and at her mirror her fingers ran tremblingly over the coils of her hair. She caught up a fresh handkerchief for her girdle, looked for an instant appealingly into her own eyes and closed them to think. Glover rapped.

She met him with a smile that she knew would stagger his fond eyes. She drugged his ear with a low-voiced greeting. "You are late, dearest."

He looked at her and caught her hands. As his head bent she let her lips lie in his kiss, and let his arm find her waist as he kissed her deeply

again. They walked together toward the fireplace, and when she saw the sadness of his face fear in her heart gave way to pity. "What is it?" she whispered. "Tell me."

"The car has come with Doubleday and McGraw, Gertrude. The wreck was terribly fatal. Morris Blood must have jumped from the cab. The track I have told you is blasted there out of the cheek of the mountain, and it's impossible to tell what his fate may be: but if he is alive I must find him. There is a good hope, I believe, for Morris; he is a man to squeeze through on a narrow chance. And Gertrude—I couldn't tell you if I didn't think you had a right to know everything I know. It breaks my heart to speak of it—McGraw is dead."

"I am so glad you told me the truth," she trembled, "for I knew it——"

"Knew it?" She confessed, hastily, how her anxiety had led her to his office, and of the terrible shock she had brought on herself. "But now I know you would not deceive me," she added; "that is why I love you, because you are always honest and true. And do you love me, as you have told me, more than all the world?"

"More than all the world, Gertrude. Why do you look so? You are trembling."

"Have you come to say good-by?"

"Only for a day or two, darling: till I can find Morris, then I come straight back to you."

"You, too, may be killed?"

"No, no."

"But I heard the man telling you you would go to your death if you attempted to cross that hill with a plough. Be honest with me; you are risking your life."

"Only as I have risked it almost every day since I came into the mountains."

"But now—now—doesn't it mean something else? Think what it means to me—your life. Think what will become of me if you should be killed in trying to open that hill—if you should fall over a precipice as Morris Blood has fallen and lies now probably dead. Don't go. Don't go, this time. You have promised me you would leave the mountains, haven't you? Don't risk all, dearest, all I have on earth, in an attempt that may utterly fail and add one more precious life to the lives now sacrificed. You do heed me, darling, don't you?"

She had disengaged herself to plead; to look directly up into his perplexed eyes. He leaned an arm on the mantel, staggered. His eyes followed hers in every word she spoke, and when she ceased he stared blankly at the fire.

"Heed you?" he answered, haltingly. "Heed

you? You are all in the world that I have to heed. My only wish is your happiness; to die for it, Gertrude, wouldn't be much——"

"All, all I ask is that you will live for it."

"Worthless as I am, I have asked you to put that happiness in my keeping—do you think your lightest word could pass me unheeded? But to this, my dearest Gertrude, every instinct of manhood binds me—to go to my friend in danger."

"If you go you will take every desperate chance to accomplish your end. Ah, I know you better than you know yourself. Ab, Ab, my darling, my lover, listen to me. Don't; don't go."

When he spoke she would not have known his voice. "Can I let him die there like a dog on the mountain side? Can't you see what I haven't words to explain as you could explain—the position it puts me in? Don't sob. Don't be afraid; look at me. I'll come back to you, darling."

She turned her tearless eyes to the mountains. "Back! Yes. I see the end. My lover will come back—come back dead. And I shall try to kiss his brave lips back to life and they will speak no more. And I shall stand when they take him from me, lonely and alone. My father that I have estranged—my foster-mother that I have with-

stood—my sister that I have repelled—will their tears flow for me then? And for this I broke from my traditions and cast away associations, gave up all my little life, stood alone against my family, poured out my heart to these deserts, these mountains, and now—they rob me of my all—and this is love!"

He stood like a broken man. "God help me, have I laid on your dear head the curse of my own life? Must you, too, suffer because our perils force us lightly to pawn our lives one for another? One night in that yard"—he pointed to the window—"I stood between the rails with a switch engine running me down. I knew nothing of it. There was no time to speak, no time to think—it was on me. Had Blood left me there one second I never should have looked into your dear face. Up on the hill with Hailey and Brodie, under the gravel and shale, I should never have cost your heart an ache like this. Better the engine had struck me then and spared you now——"

"No, I say, no!" she exclaimed, wildly. "Better this moment together than a lifetime apart!"

"—For me he threw himself in front of the drivers. This moment is mine and yours because he gave his right hand for it—shall I desert him now he needs me? And so a hundred times and in a hundred ways we gamble with death and

laugh if we cheat it: and our poor reward is only sometimes to win where far better men have failed. So in this railroad life two men stand, as he and I have stood, luck or ill-luck, storm or fair weather, together. And death speaks for one; and whichever he calls it is ever the other must answer. And this—is duty."

"Then do your duty."

Distinctly, and terrifying in their unexpectedness, came the words from the farther end of the parlor. They turned, stunned. Gertrude's father was crossing the room. He raised his hand to dispel Glover's sudden angry look. "I was lying on the couch; your voices roused me and I could not escape. You have put clearly the case you stand in," he spoke to Glover, "and I have intervened only to spare both of you useless agony of argument. The question that concerns you two and me is not at this moment up for decision; the other question is, and it is for you, my daughter, now, to play the woman. I have tried as I could to shield you from rough weather. You have left port without consulting me, and the storms of womanhood are on you. Sir, when do you start?"

"My engine is waiting."

"Then ask your people to attach my car. You can make equally good time, and since for better

or worse we have cut into this game we will see it out together."

Gertrude threw her arms around her father's neck with a happy sob as Glover left. "Oh, daddy, daddy. If you only knew him!"

CHAPTER XXI

PILOT

"THERE are mountains a man can do business with," muttered Bucks in the private car, his mustache drooping broadly above his reflecting words. "Mountains that will give and take once in a while, play fair occasionally. But Pilot has fought us every inch of the way since the day we first struck a pick into it. It is savage and unrelenting. I'd rather negotiate with Sitting Bull for a right of way through his private bathroom than to ask an easement from Pilot for a tamarack tie. I don't know why it was ever called Pilot: if I named it, it should be Sitting Bull. What the Sioux were to the white men, what the Spider Water is to the bridgemen, that, and more, Pilot has been to the mountain men.

"There was no compromise with Pilot even after we got in on it. Snowslides, washouts, bowlders, forest-fires—and yet the richest quartz mines in the world lie behind it. This little branch, Mr. Brock, forty-eight miles, pays the operating expenses of the whole mountain division, and has

done so almost since the day it was opened. But I'd rather lose the revenue ten times every year than to lose Morris Blood." The second vice-president was talking to Mr. Brock. Their car was just rounding the curve into the gap in front of Mount Pilot.

"What do you think of Blood's chances?" asked Mr. Brock.

"I don't know. A mountain man has nine lives."

"What does Glover think?"

"He doesn't say."

"Who built this line?"

"Two pretty good men ran the first thirty miles, but neither of them could give me a practicable line south of the gap; this last eighteen miles up and down and around Pilot was Glover's first work in the mountains. It's engineering. Every trick ever played in the Rockies, and one or two of Brodie's old combinations in the Andes, they tell me, are crowded into these eighteen miles. There, there's old Sitting Bull in all his clouds and his glory."

Glover had left the car at Sleepy Cat, going ahead with the relief train. Picked men from every district on the division had been assembling all the afternoon to take up the search for the missing superintendent. Section men from the

Sweetgrass wastes, and bridgemen from the foothills, roadmasters from the Heart Mountains—home of the storm and the snow—and Rat Cañon trackwalkers that could spot a break in the dark under twelve inches of ballast; Morgan, the wrecker, and his men, and the mountain linemen with their foreman, old Bill Dancing—fiend drunk and giant sober—were scattered on Mount Pilot, while a rotary ahead of a battery of big engines was shoved again and again up the snow-covered hill.

Anxious to get the track open in the belief that Blood could best be got at from beyond the S bridge, Glover, standing with the branch roadmaster, Smith Young, on the ledge above the engines directed the fight for the hill. He had promised Gertrude he would keep out of the cab, and far across the curve below he could see the Brock car, where Bucks was directing the search on the eastern side of the gulch.

Callahan and the linemen were spreading both ways through the timber on the plateau opposite, but the snow made the work extremely difficult, and the short day allowed hardly more than a start. On the hill Glover's men advanced barely a hundred feet in three hours: darkness spread over the range with no sign of the missing man, and with the forebodings that none could shake

off of what the night's exposure, even if he were uninjured, might mean.

Supper was served to the men in the relief trains, and outside fires were forbidden by Glover, who asked that every foot of the track as far as the gap be patrolled all night.

It was nearly ten o'clock when Glover, supperless, reached the car with his dispositions made for the night. While he talked with the men, Clem, the star cook of the Brock family, under special orders grilled a big porterhouse steak and presently asked him back to the dining-table, where, behind the shaded candles, Gertrude waited.

They sat down opposite each other; but not until Glover saw there were two plates instead of one, and learned that Gertrude had eaten no dinner because she was waiting for him, did he mutter something about all that an American girl is capable of in the way of making a man grateful and happy. There was nothing to hurry them back to the other end of the car, and they did not rejoin Mr. Brock and Bucks, who were smoking forward, until eleven o'clock. Callahan came in afterward, and sitting together Mr. Brock and Gertrude listened while the three railroad men planned the campaign for the next day.

Parting late, Glover said good-night and left with Callahan to inspect the rotary. The fearful

punishment of the day's work on the knives had shown itself, and since dark, relays of mechanics from the Sleepy Cat shops had been busy with the cutting gear, and the companion plough had already been ordered in from the eighth district.

Glover returned to the car at one o'clock. The lights were low, and Clem, a night-owl, fixed him in a chair near the door. For an hour everything was very still, then Gertrude, sleeping lightly, heard voices. Glover walked back past the compartments; she heard him asking Clem for brandy —Bill Dancing, the lineman, had come with news.

The negro brought forward a decanter and Glover poured a gobletful for the old man, who shook from the chill of the night air.

"The boys claim it's imagination," Dancing, steadied by the alcohol, continued, "but it's a fire way over below the second bridge. I've watched it for an hour; now you come."

They went away and were gone a long time. Glover returned alone—Clem had disappeared; a girlish figure glided out of the gloom to meet him.

"I couldn't sleep," she whispered. "I heard you leave and dressed to wait." She looked in the dim light as slight as a child, and with his hand at her waist he sunk on his knee to look up into her face. "How can I deserve it all?"

She blinded his upturned eyes in her hands, and not until she found her fingers were wet did she understand all he had tried to put into his words.

"Have you any news?" she murmured, as he rose.

"I believe they have found him."

She clasped her hands. "Heaven be praised. Oh, is it sure?"

"I mean, Dancing, the old lineman, has seen his fire. At least, we are certain of it. We have been watching it two hours. It's a speck of a blaze away across toward the mines. It never grows nor lessens, just a careful little campfire where fuel is scarce—as it is now with all the snow. We've lighted a big beacon on the hill for an answer, and at daybreak we shall go after him. The planning is all done and I am free now till we're ready to start."

She tried to make him lie down for a nap on the couch. He tried to persuade her to retire until morning, and in sweet contention they sat talking low of their love and their happiness—and of the hills a reckless girl romped over in old Allegheny, and of the shingle gunboats a sleepy-eyed boy launched in dauntless fleets upon the yellow eddies of the Mississippi; and of the chance that should one day bring boy and girl together, lovers, on the crest of the far Rockies.

Pilot

Lights were moving up and down the hill when they rose from Clem's astonishing breakfast.

"You will be careful," she said. He had taken her in his arms at the door, and promising he kissed her and whispered good-by.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SOUTH ARÊTE

THEY had planned a quick relief with a small party, for every hour of exposure lessened the missing man's chances. Glover chose for his companions two men: Dancing—far and away the best climber in the telegraph corps, and Smith Young, roadmaster, a chainman of Glover's when he ran the Pilot line. Dancing and Glover were large men of unusual strength, and Young, lighter and smaller, had been known in a pinch to handle an ordinary steel rail. But above everything each—even Glover, the youngest—was a man of resource and experience in mountain craft.

They left the track near the twin bridges with only ropes and picks and skis, and carrying stimulants and food. Without any attempt to catch his trail from where they knew Blood must have started they made their way as directly as possible down the side of the mountain and in the direction of the gap. The stupendous difficulties of making headway across the eastern slope did not become apparent until the rescuing party was out of

sight of those they had left, but from where they floundered in ragged washouts or spread in line over glassy escarpments they could see far up the mountain the rotary throwing a white cloud into the sunshine and hear the far-off clamor of the engines on the hill.

Below the snow-field which they crossed they found the superintendent's trail, and saw that his effort had been to cross the gap at that point and make his way out toward the western grade, where an easy climb would have brought him to the track; or where by walking some distance he could reach the track without climbing a foot, the grade there being nearly four per cent.

They saw, too, why he had been forced to give up that hope, for what would have been difficult for three fresh men with shoes was an impossibility for a spent man in the snow alone. They knew that what they had covered in two hours had probably cost him ten, for before they had followed him a dozen feet they saw that he was dragging a leg; farther, the snow showed stains and they crossed a field where he had sat down and bandaged his leg after it had bled for a hundred yards.

The trail began, as they went on, to lose its character. Whether from weakness or uncertainty Blood's steps had become wandering, and

they noticed that he paid less attention to directness, but shunned every obstacle that called for climbing, struggling great distances around rough places to avoid them. They knew it meant that he was husbanding failing strength and was striving to avoid reopening his wound.

Twice they marked places in which he had sat to adjust his bandages, and the strain of what they read in the snow quickened their anxiety. Since that day Smith Young, superintendent now of the mountain division, has never hunted, because he could never afterward follow the trail of a wounded animal.

They found places where he had hunted for fuel, and firing signals regularly they reached the spot where he had camped the night before, and saw the ashes of his fire. He was headed south; not because there was more hope that way—there was less—but as if he must keep moving, and that were easiest. A quarter of a mile below where he had spent the night they caught sight of a man sitting on a fallen tree resting his leg. The next moment three men were in a tumbling race across the slope, and Blood, weakly hurrahing, fainted in Glover's arms.

His story was short. He reminded his rescuers of the little spring on the hill at the point where

the wreck had occurred. The ice that always spread across the track and over the edge of the gulch had been chopped out by the shovellers the afternoon before, but water trickling from the rock had laid a fresh trap for unwary feet during the night. In jumping from the gangway at the moment of the wreck Blood's heels had landed on smooth ice and he had tumbled and slid six hundred feet. Recovering consciousness at the bottom of a washout he found the calf of one leg ripped a little, as he put it. The loss of one side of his mustache, swept away in the slide, and leaving on his face a peculiarly forlorn expression, he did not take account of—declaring on the whole, as he smiled into the swimming eyes around him, that with the exception of tobacco he was doing very well.

They got him in front of a big fire, plied him with food and stimulants, and Glover, from a surgical packet, bandaged anew the wound in his leg. Then came the question of retreat.

They discussed two plans. The first to retrace their steps entirely; the second, to go back to where the gap could be attempted and the western track gained below the hill. Each meant long and severe climbing, each presented its particular difficulties, and three men of the four felt that if the torn artery opened once more their victory would be

barren—that Blood needed surgical aid promptly if at all. But Dancing had a third plan.

It was while they still consulted at this point that their fire was seen on Pilot Hill and reported to Bucks at the Brock car, from which the rapidly moving party had been seen only at long intervals during the morning.

The fire was the looked-for signal that the superintendent had been reached, and the word went from group to group of men up the hill. Through the strong glass that Glover had left with her, Gertrude could see the smoke, and the storming signals of the panting engines above her made sweeter music after she caught with her eye the faint column in the distant gap. Even her father, feeling still something like a conscript, brightened up at the general rejoicing. He had produced his own glass and let Gertrude with eager prompting help him to find the smoke. The moment the position of Glover's party was made definite, Bucks ordered the car run down the Hog's Back to a point so much closer that across the broad cañon, flanking Pilot on the south, they could make out with their glasses the figures of the three men and, when they began to move, the smaller figure of Morris Blood.

Callahan had joined his chief to watch the situation, and they speculated as to how the four would

get out of the gulf in which they were completely hemmed. Gertrude and her father stood near.

The eyes of the two bronzed railroad men at her side were like pilot guides to Gertrude. When she lost the wayfarers in the gullies or along the narrow defiles that gave them passage between towering rocks, their eyes restored the plodding line. Callahan was the first to detect the change from the expected course. "They are working east," said he, after a moment's careful observation.

"East?" echoed Bucks. "You mean west."

Callahan hung to his glass. "No," he repeated, "east—and south. Here."

Bucks took the glass and looked a long time. "I do not understand," said he; "they are certainly working east. What can they be after, east? Well, they can't go very far that way without bridging the Devil's Cañon. Callahan," he exclaimed, with sure instinct, "they will head south. Wait now till they appear again."

He relinquished the glass to explain to Mr. Brock where next to look for them. There was a long interval during which they did not reappear. Then the little file emerging from the shadow of a rock skirted a field of snow straight to the south. There were but three men in line. One, a little ahead, breaking path; following, two large men

tramping close together, the foremost stooping under the weight of a man lying face upward on his back, while the man behind supported the legs under his arms.

"They are carrying Morris Blood. He is hurt —that was to be expected. What?" exclaimed Bucks, hardly a moment afterward, "they are crossing the snow. Callahan, by heaven, they are walking for the south side of Pilot, that's what it means. It is a forced march; they are making for the mines."

Mount Pilot, from the crest that divides at Devil's Gap, rises abruptly in a three-faced peak, the pinnacle of which lies to the south. Several hundred feet above the base lie the group of gold-mines behind the mountain, and a short railroad spur blasted across the southern face runs to them from Glen Tarn. Below, the mountain wall breaks in long steps almost vertically to the base, toward which Glover's party was heading.

The move made new dispositions necessary. Orders flew from Bucks like curlews, for it was more essential than ever to open the hill speedily.

The private car was run across the Hog's Back, and the news sent to the rotary crew with injunctions to push with all effort as far at least as the mine switch, that help might be sent out on the spur to meet the party on the climb.

The increased activity apparent far up and down the mountain as the word went round, the bringing up of the last reserve engines for the hill battery, the effort to get into communication by telegraph with the mine hospital and Glen Tarn Springs, the feverish haste of the officials in the car to make the new dispositions, all indicated to Gertrude the approach of a crisis—the imminence of a supreme effort to save one life if the endeavor enlisted the men and resources of the whole division. New gangs of shovellers strung on flat-cars were being pushed forward. Down the hill, spent and disabled engines were returning from the front, and while they took sidings, fresh engines, close-coupled, steamed slowly like leviathans past them up the hill.

The moment the track was clear, the private car was backed again down the ridge. Following the serpentine winding of the right of way, the general manager was able to run the car far around the mountain, and it stopped opposite the southern face, which rose across the broad cañon. When the party in the car got their glasses fixed, the little company beyond the gulf had begun their climb and were strung like marionettes up the base of Pilot.

The south face of the mountain, sheer for nearly a thousand feet, is broken by narrow ledges that

make an ascent possible, and not until the peak passes the timber does snow ordinarily find lodgment upon that side. Swept by the winds from the Spanish Sinks, the vertical reaches above the base usually offer no obstruction to a rapid climb, though except perhaps by early prospectors, the arête had never been scaled. Glover, however, in locating, had covered every stretch of the mountain on each of its sides, and Dancing's poles and brackets, like banderillas stung into the tough hide of a bull, circled Pilot from face to face. These two men were leading the ascent; below them could be distinguished the roadmaster and the injured superintendent.

Stripped to the belt and lashed in the party rope, the leader, gaunt and sinewy, stretched like an earthworm up the face of the arête—crossing, recrossing, climbing, retreating, his spiked feet settling warily into fresh holes below, his sensitive hands spreading like feelers high over the smooth granite for new holds above. Slowly, always, and with the deliberate reserve that quieted with confidence the feverish hearts watching across the gulf, the leaders steadily scaled the height that separated them from the track. Like sailors patiently warping home, the three men in advance drew and lifted the fourth, who doughtily helped himself with foot and hand as chance allowed and

watched patiently from below while his comrades disputed with the sheer wall for a new step above.

Bucks and Callahan, following every move, mapped the situation to their companions as its features developed. With each triumph on the arête, bursts of commendation and surprise came from the usually taciturn men watching the struggle with growing wonder. Bucks, apprehensive of delays in the track-opening on the hill, sent Callahan back in the car with instructions to pick a gang of ten men and pack them somewhom across the snow to the mine spur, that they might be ready to meet the climbing party and carry the superintendent down to the mine hospital.

Thirty feet below the mine track and as far above where Glover at that moment was sitting—his rope made fast and his legs hanging over a ledge, while his companions reached new positions—a granite wall rises to where the upper face has been blasted away from the roadbed. To the east, this wall hangs without a break up or down for a hundred feet, but to the west it roughens and splits away from the main spur, forming a crevice or chimney from two to three feet wide, opening at the top to ten feet, where a small bridge carries the track across it. This chimney had been Dancing's quest from the moment the ascent began, for he

had lost a man in that chimney when stringing the mine wires, and knew precisely what it was.

The chimney once gained, Dancing figured that the last thirty feet should be easy work, and he had made but one miscalculation—when he had descended it to pull up his lineman, it was summer. Without extraordinary difficulty, Glover gained the ledge where the chimney opened and waited for his companions to ascend. When all were up, they rested a few moments on their dizzy perch, and, while Bill Dancing investigated the chimney, Glover took the chance to renew once more Morris Blood's bandages, which, strained by the climbing, caused continual anxiety.

Bucks, with the party in his glass, could see every move. He saw Dancing disappear into the rock while his comrades rested, and made him out, after some delay, reappearing from the cleft. What he could not make out was the word that Dancing brought back; the chimney was a solid mass of ice.

Standing with the two men, Gertrude used her glass constantly. Frequently she asked questions, but frequently she divined ahead of her companions the directions and the movements. The hesitation that followed Dancing's return did not escape her. Up and down the narrow step on which they stood,

the three men walked, scanning anxiously the wall that stretched above them.

So, hounds at fault on a trail double on their steps and move uneasily to and fro, nosing the missing scent. As lions flatten behind their cage-bars, the climbers laid themselves against the rock and pushed to the right and the left seeking an avenue of escape. They had every right to expect that help would already have reached them, but on the hill, through haste and confusion of orders, the new rotary had stripped a gear, and an hour had been lost in getting in the second plough. For safety, the climbers had in their predicament nothing to fear. The impelling necessity for action was the superintendent's condition; his companions knew he could not last long without a surgeon.

When suspense had become unbearable, Dancing re-entered the chimney. He was gone a long time. He reappeared, crawling slowly out on an unseen footing, a mere flaw in the smooth stretch of granite half way up to the track. By cutting his rope and throwing himself a dozen times at death, old Bill Dancing had gained a foothold, made fast a line, and divided the last thirty feet to be covered. One by one, his companions disappeared from sight—not into the chimney, but to the side of it where Dancing had blazed a few dizzy steps

and now had a rope dangling to make the ascent practicable.

One by one, Gertrude saw the climbers, reappearing above, crawl like flies out on the face of the rock and, with craning necks and cautious steps, seek new advantage above. They discovered at length the remains of a scrub pine jutting out below the railroad track. The tree had been sawed off almost at the root, when the roadbed was levelled, and a few feet of the trunk was left hugging upward against the granite wall.

Glover, Young, and Dancing consulted a moment. The thing was not impossible; the superintendent was bleeding to death.

Spectators across the gap saw movements they could not quite comprehend. Safety lines were overhauled for the last time, the picks put in the keeping of Morris Blood, who lay flat on the ledge. Glover and Bill Dancing, facing outward, planted themselves side by side against the rocky wall. Smith Young, facing inward, flattened himself in Glover's arms, passed across him and, pushing his safety-girdle well up under his arms, stood a moment between the two big men. Glover and Dancing, getting their hands through the belt from either side, gripped him, and Young uncoiled from his right hand a rope noosed like a lariat. Steadied by his companions and swinging his arms in a

cautious segment on the wall, he tried to hitch the noose over the trunk of the pine.

With the utmost skill and patience, he coaxed the loop up again and again into the air overhead, but the brush of the short branches against the rock defeated every attempt to get a hold.

He rested, passed the rope into his other hand, and with the same collected persistence endeavored to throw it over from the left.

Sweat beaded Bucks' forehead as he looked. Gertrude's father, the man of sixty millions, with nerves bedded in ice, crushed an unlighted cigar between his teeth, and tried to steady the glass that shook in his hand. Gertrude, resting one hand on a bowlder against which she steadied herself, neither spoke nor moved. The roadmaster could not land his line.

The two men released him and, with arms spread wide, he slipped over to where Morris Blood lay, took from him the two picks, and cautiously rejoined his comrades. Two of the men reversing their positions, faced the rock wall. They fixed a pick into a cranny between their heads, crouched together, and the third, planting his feet first on their knees and then their shoulders, was raised slowly above them.

The glasses turned from afar caught a sheen of sunshine that spread for an instant across the

face of the mountain and sharply outlined the flattened form high on the arête. The figure seemed brought by the dazzling light startlingly near, and those looking could distinguish in his hand a pick, which, with his right arm extended, he slowly swung up and up the face of the rock until he should swing it high to hook through the roots of the pine.

Gertrude asked Bucks who it was that spread himself above his comrades, and he answered, Dancing; but it was Glover.

Deliberately his extended arm rose and fell in the arc he was following, higher and higher, till the pick swung above his head and lodged where he sent it among the pine-tree roots. At the very moment, one of the men supporting him moved—the pick had dislodged a heavy chip of granite; in falling it struck his crouching supporter on the head. The man steadied himself instantly, but the single instant cost the balance of the upmost figure. With a suppressed struggle, heartbreaking half a mile away, the man above strove to right himself. Like light his second hand reached for the pick handle; he could not recover it. The pyramid wavered and Glover, helpless, spread his hands wide.

By an instinct deeper than life, she knew him then, and cried out and out in agony. But the

pyramid was dissolving before his eyes, and she saw a strange figure with outstretched arms, a figure she no longer knew, slowly slipping headlong down a blood-red wall that burned itself into her brain.

CHAPTER XXIII

BUSINESS

CRUELLY broken and bruised, Young, Bill Dancing, and Glover late that night were brought up in rope cradles by the wrecking derrick and taken into the Brock car, turned by its owner into a hospital. An hour after the fall on the south arête the hill blockade had been broken. With word of the disaster to nerve men already strained to the utmost, effort became superhuman, the impossible was achieved, and the relief train run in on the mine track.

Morris Blood, unconscious, was lifted from the narrow shelf at four o'clock and put under a surgeon's care in time to save his life. To rig a tackle for a three-hundred-foot lift was another matter; but even while the derrick-car stood idle on the spur waiting for the cable equipment from the mine, a laughing boy of a surgeon from the hospital was lowered with the first of the linemen to the snow-field where the three men roped together had fallen, and surgical aid reached them before sunset.

Last to come up, because he still gave the orders, Glover, cushioned and strapped in the tackle, was lifted out of the blackness of the night into the streaming glare of the headlights. Very carefully he was swung down to the mattresses piled on the track, and, before all that looked and waited, a woman knelt and kissed his sunken eyes. Not then did the men, dim in the circle about them, show what they felt, though they knew, to the meanest trackhand, all it meant; not when, after a bare moment of hesitation, Gertrude's father knelt opposite on the mattress-pile, did they break their silence, though they shrewdly guessed what that meant.

But when Glover pulled together his disordered members and at Gertrude's side walked without help to the step of the car, the murmur broke into a cheer that rang from Pilot to Glen Tarn.

"It was more than half my fault," he breathed to her, after his broken arms had been set and the long gash on his head stitched. "I need not have lost my balance if I had kept my head. Gertrude, I may as well admit it—I'm a coward since I've begun to love you. I've never told you how I saw your face once between the curtains of an empty sleeper. But it came back to me just as Dancing's shoulder slipped—that's why I went. I'm done forever with long chances." And she, silent,

tried only to quiet him while the car moved down the gap bearing them from Pilot together.

"Do you know what day to-morrow is?" Gertrude was opening a box of flowers that Solomon had brought from the express-office; Glover, plastered with bandages, was standing before the grate fire in the hotel parlor.

"To-morrow?" he echoed. "Sunday."

"Sunday! Why do you always guess Sunday when I ask you what day it is?"

"You would think every day Sunday if you had had as good a time as I have for six weeks."

"The doctor does say you're doing beautifully. I asked him yesterday how soon you would be well and he said you never had been so well since he knew you. But what *is* to-morrow?"

"Thanksgiving."

"Thanksgiving, indeed! Yes, every day is Thanksgiving for us. But it's not especially *that*."

"Christmas."

"Nonsense! To-morrow is the second anniversary of our engagement."

"My Lord, Gertrude, have we been engaged two years? Why, at that rate I can't possibly marry you till I'm forty-four."

"It isn't two years, it's two months. And to-night they have their memorial services for poor

Paddy McGraw. And, do you know, your friend Mr. Foley has our engine now? Yes; he came up the other day to ask about you, but in reality to tell me he had been promoted. I think he ought to have been, after I spoke myself to Mr. Archibald about it. But what touched me was, the poor fellow asked if I wouldn't see about getting some flowers for the memorial at the engineer's lodge to-night—and he didn't want his wife to know anything about it, because she would scold him for spending his money—see what you are coming to! So I suggested he should let me provide his flowers and ours together, and when I tried to find out what he wanted, he asked if a throttle made of flowers would be all right."

"Your heart would not let you say no?"

"I told him it would be lovely, and to leave it all to me."

She brought forward the box she was opening. "See how they have laid this throttle-bar of violets across these Galax leaves—and latched it with a rose. Here, Solomon," she called the boy from an adjoining room, "take this very carefully. No. There isn't any card. Oh," she exclaimed, as he left, and she clasped her lifted hands, "I am glad, I am glad we are leaving these mountains. Do you know papa is to be here to-morrow? And that

your speech must be ready? He isn't going to give his consent without being asked."

"I suppose not," said Glover, dejectedly.

"What are you going to say?"

"I shall say that I consider him worthy of my confidence and esteem."

"I think you would make more headway, dearest, if you should tell him you considered *your*self worthy of *his* confidence and esteem."

"But, hang it, I don't."

"Well, couldn't you, for once, fib a little? Oh, Ab; I'll tell you what I wish you *could* do."

"Pray what?"

"Talk a little business to him. I feel sure, if you could only talk business awhile, papa would be *all* right."

"Business! If it's only a question of talking business, the thing's as good as done. I can't talk anything but business."

"Can't you, indeed! I like that. Pray what did you talk to me on the platform of my father's own car?"

"Business."

"You talked the silliest stuff I ever listened to——"

"Not reflecting on anyone present, of course."

"And, Ab——"

"Yes."

"If you could take him aback somehow—nothing would give him such an idea of you. I think that was what—well, I was so *completely* overcome by your audacity——"

"You seemed so," commented Glover, rather grimly. "Very well, if you want him taken aback, I will take him aback, even if I have to resort to force." He withdrew his right arm from its sling and began unwrapping the bandages and throwing the splints into the fire.

"What in the world are you doing?" asked Gertrude, in consternation.

"There's no use carrying these things any longer. My right arm is just as strong as it ever was—and to tell the truth——"

"Now keep your distance, if you please."

"To tell the truth, I never could play ball left-handed, anyway, Gertrude. Now, let's begin easy. Just shake hands with me."

"I'll do nothing of the sort. It's bad form, anyway. You may just shake hands with yourself. All things considered, I think you have good reason to."

"I understand you were chief engineer of this system at one time," began Mr. Brock, at the very outset of the dreaded interview.

"I was," answered Glover.

"And that you resigned voluntarily to take an inferior position on the Mountain Division?"

"That is true."

"Railroad men with ambition," commented Mr. Brock, dryly, "don't usually turn their faces from responsibility in that way. They look higher, and not lower."

"I thought I was looking higher when I came to the mountains."

"That may do for a joke, but I am talking business."

"I, too; and since I am, let me explain to you why I resigned a higher position for a lower one. The fact is well known; the reason isn't. I came to this road at the call of your second vice-president, Mr. Bucks. I have always enjoyed a large measure of his confidence. We saw some years ago that a reorganization was inevitable, and spent many nights discussing the different features of it. This is what we determined: That the key to this whole system with its eight thousand miles of main line and branches is this Mountain Division. To operate the system economically and successfully means that the grades must be reduced and the curvature reduced on this division. Surely, with you, I need not dwell on the A B C's of twentieth century railroading. It is the road that can handle the tonnage cheapest that will survive. All

this we knew, and I told him to put me out on this division. It was during the receivership and there was no room for frills.

"I have worked here on a small salary and done everything but maul spikes to keep down expenses on the division, because we had to make some showing to whoever wanted to buy our junk. In this way I took a roving commission and packed my bag from an office where I could acquire nothing I did not already know to a position where I could get hold of the problem of mountain transportation and cut the coal bills of the road in two."

"Have you done it?"

"Have I cut the coal bills in two? No; but I have learned how. It will cost money to do that——"

"How much money?"

"Thirty millions of dollars."

"A good deal of money."

"No."

"No?"

"No. Don't let us be afraid to face figures. You will spend a hundred millions before you quit, Mr. Brock, and you will make another hundred millions in doing it. To put it bluntly, the mountains must be brought to terms. For three years I have eaten and lived and slept with them. I know every grade, curve, tunnel, and culvert from here to Bear

Dance—yes, to the coast. The day of heavy gradients and curves for transcontinental tonnage is gone by. If I ever get a chance, I will rip this right of way open from end to end and make it possible to send freight through these ranges at a cost undreamed of in the estimates of to-day. But that was not my only object in coming to the mountains."

"Go ahead."

"Mr. Bucks and the men he has gathered around him—Callahan, Blood and the rest of us—are railroad men. Railroading is our business; we know nothing else. There was an embarrassing chance that when our buyer came he might be hostile to the present management. Happily," Glover bowed to the Pittsburg magnate, "he isn't; but he might have been——"

"I see."

"We were prepared for that."

"How?"

"I shouldn't speak of this if I did not know you were Mr. Bucks' closest friend. Even he doesn't know it, but six months of my own time—not the company's—I put in on a matter that concerned my friends and myself, and I have the notes for a new line to parallel this if it were needed—and Blood and I have the only pass within three hundred miles north or south to run it over. These

were some of the reasons, Mr. Brock, why I came to the mountains."

"I understand. I understand perfectly. Mr. Glover, what is your age, sir?"

The time seemed ripe to put Gertrude's second hint into play.

"That is a subject I never discuss with anyone, Mr. Brock."

He waited just a moment to let the magnate get his breath, and continued, "May I tell you why? When the road went into the receivership, I was named as one of the receivers on behalf of the Government. The President, when I first met him during my term, asked for my father, thinking he was the man that had been recommended to him. He wouldn't believe me when I assured him I was his appointee. 'If I had known how young you were, Glover,' said he to me, afterward, 'I never should have dared appoint you.' The position paid me twenty-five thousand dollars a year for four years; but the incident paid me better than that, for it taught me never to discuss my age."

"I see. I see. A fine point. You have taught *me* something. By the way, about the pass you spoke of—I suppose you understand the importance of getting hold of a strategic point like that to—a—forestall—competition?"

"I have hold of it."

"I do not mind saying to you, under all the circumstances, that there has been a little friction with the Harrison people. Do you see? And, for reasons that may suggest themselves, there may be more. They might conclude to run a line to the coast themselves. The young man has, I believe, been turned down——"

"I understood the—the slate had been—changed slightly," stammered Glover, coloring.

"There might be resentment, that's all. Blood is loyal to us, I presume."

"There's no taint anywhere in Morris Blood. He is loyalty itself."

"What would you think of him as General Manager? Callahan goes to the river as Traffic Manager. Mr. Bucks, you know, is the new President; these are his recommendations. What do you think of them?"

"No better men on earth for the positions, and I'm mighty glad to see them get what they deserve."

"Our idea is to leave you right here in the mountains." It was hard to be left completely out of the new deal, but Glover did not visibly wince. "With the title," added Mr. Brock, after he knew his arrow had gone home, "with the title of Second Vice-president, which Mr. Bucks now holds. That

will give you full swing in your plans for the rebuilding of the system. I want to see them carried out as the estimates I've been studying this winter show. Don't thank me. I did not know till yesterday they were entirely your plans. You can have every dollar you need; it will rest with you to produce the results. I guess that's all. No, stop. I want you to go East with us next week for a month or two as our guest. You can forward your work the faster when you get back, and I should like you to meet the men whose money you are to spend. Were you waiting to see Gertrude?"

"Why—yes, sir—I——"

"I'll see whether she's around."

Gertrude did not appear for some moments, then she half ran and half glided in, radiant. "I couldn't get away!" she exclaimed. "He's talking about you yet to Aunt Jane and Marie. He says you're charged with dynamite—*I* knew that—a most remarkable young man. How did you ever convince him you knew anything? I am confident you don't. You must have taken him somehow aback, didn't you?"

"If you want to give your father a touch of asthma," suggested Glover, "ask him how old I am; but he had me scared once or twice," admitted the engineer, wiping the cold sweat from his wrists.

"*Did* he give his consent?"

"Why—hang it—I—we got to talking business and I forgot to——"

"So like you, dear. However, it must be all right, for he said he should need your help in buying the coast branches and The Short Line."

"The Short Line," gasped Glover. "Well, I haven't inventoried lately. If we marry in June——"

"Don't worry about that, for we sha'n't marry in June, my love."

"But when we do, we shall need some money for a wedding-trip——"

"We certainly shall; a lot of it, dearie."

"I may have ten or twelve hundred left after that is provided for. But my confidence in your father's judgment is very great, and if he's going to make up a pool, my money is at his service, as far as it will go, to buy The Short Line—or any other line he may take a fancy to."

"Why, he's just telling Marie about your making a hundred thousand dollars in four years by being wonderfully shrewd——"

"But that confounded mine that I told you about——"

"You dear old stupid. Never mind, you have made a real strike to-day. But if you ever again delude papa into thinking you know more than I do, I shall expose you without mercy."

The train, a private car special, carrying Mr. Brock, chairman of the board, and his family, the new president and the second vice-president elect, was pulling slowly across the long, high spans of the Spider bridge. Glover and Gertrude had gone back to the observation platform. Leaning on his arm, she was looking across the big valley and into the west. The sun, setting clear, tinged with gold the far snows of the mountains.

"It is less than a year," she was murmuring, "since I crossed this bridge; think of it. And what bridges have I not crossed since! See. Your mountains are fading away——"

"My mountains faded away, dear heart, don't you know, when you told me I might love you. As for those"—his eyes turned from the distant ranges back to her eyes—"after all, they brought me you."

THE END

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